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The self-revelation of Jesus  
Christ







THE SELF-REVELATION OF  
JESUS CHRIST



*B.B. Warfield*  
THE SELF-REVELATION  
OF JESUS CHRIST

WITH AN EXAMINATION  
OF SOME NATURALISTIC HYPOTHESES

By JOHN <sup>✓</sup>KENNEDY M.A. D.D.

HONORARY PROFESSOR NEW COLLEGE LONDON

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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR.*

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THE AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE GOSPELS, TRACED FROM THE  
FOURTH INTO THE FIRST CENTURY (pp. 193).

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST AN HISTORICAL FACT (pp. 188).

THE AGE AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE PENTATEUCH (pp. 92).

A POPULAR HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES : Part First—  
Theism and Related subjects. Part Second — Christ and  
Christianity. Part Third — The Divine Book, or the Super-  
natural in the Bible its own witness, with especial reference to  
the Old Testament (pp. 464).

## P R E F A C E .

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SOME years ago the Author published a small volume entitled *Pilate's Question*, 'WHENCE ART THOU?' *An Essay on the Personal claims asserted by Jesus Christ, and how to account for them.* But he has long felt a desire to treat the subject more adequately, or, at least, less inadequately; and the present volume, in which some portions of the former volume are freely used, is an endeavour to realize that desire. The subject is of supreme importance. If the Prophet of Nazareth was what He professed to be, we are bound to receive Him with a faith that will actuate our whole spiritual nature and life. To do less is both an intellectual and a moral offence. If He was not what He professed to be, no zeal could be too burning to root out the idolatry of which His name has been the symbol and object for more than eighteen centuries. But in order to a due impression of what He really professed to be, it is not enough to quote a few words of His own, such as 'I and My Father are One,

and 'Before Abraham was I am;' or the words of Peter at Cæsarea-Philippi, or the words which Thomas addressed to Him after His resurrection. We must read His whole history continuously, and mark, learn, and inwardly digest what He said and how He said it, what He did and how He did it, and what others said to Him and of Him and how He received their sayings. In the first part of this work I have endeavoured to aid the reader to do this by reviewing, with very little comment, the words and acts of Jesus in their bearings on the doctrine of His Person and work. The doubter will find that in this review, and in the arguments which follow, I assume no more as a beginning or basis of discussion than is commonly admitted even by those who have passed beyond doubt into unbelief. But it is claimed that advancing from this basis, he shall follow the argument to a legitimate conclusion.

Apart from certainties, which are such although dependent on historic evidence, there are two *facts* lying before us—first, the Gospels, and secondly, the portraiture which they contain. The Gospels exist—they are in our hands, whencesoever they have come and by whomsoever they were written. These Gospels portray a life and character, whether it be real or ideal: and the portraiture

not elaborated by literary skill, but shining as by a light of its own in a simply told story. What shall we do with these two facts? How shall we account them? How interpret them? Was Rousseau wrong when he said that it would require a Jesus to forge a Jesus? The facts have only to be studied in their own light to justify us in saying, that the arguments are many which lead to the conclusion that the Gospels and the Jesus whom they portray are not the "work of art or man's device."

If our conclusion is accepted it carries with it important consequences. There are questions and problems of which, indeed, it is not itself a direct solution. But (1) it must be admitted that if Jesus of Nazareth was and is what His words seem to imply, the fact of His Divine Personality throws a conclusive light on other questions. The Personality of God and the spirituality of man are at once established. We may still concern ourselves with arguments, more or less satisfactory, against Pantheism and Materialism. But being once assured that in Jesus Christ we have an Incarnation of the God of Truth and Love, we shall feel that practically we are independent of these arguments. And (2) with this assurance, we shall feel that we may well be content to leave many questions unanswered, and submit to an ignorance which is necessitated by the

limitations of our intellectual capacities. As far as we have light to lead us, it is our duty to follow. But where the light fails, either through our incapacity to see it or from any other cause, it is our duty to bow to the inevitable, and in the face of all mysteries, intellectual or moral, to obey our Master's behest—'HAVE FAITH IN GOD.'

The Christ whom we find in the Gospels, we need scarcely add, is neither an 'Oriental Christ' nor an 'Occidental,' but a 'Universal.' To make Him either Eastern or Western is to rob Him of His glory. He came to redeem MAN, and to reign over MAN. Such at least was His own idea, and such alone is the idea that is consistent with either prophecy or history.

*Hampstead, October, 1887.*



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PART FIRST.

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REVIEW OF THE WORDS AND ACTS  
OF JESUS CHRIST.





## REVIEW OF THE WORDS AND ACTS OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE have in our hands certain books called 'Gospels,' small in bulk but of profound interest to the world. Without for the present asking any questions as to their authenticity or authority, we open and study them to ascertain who and what manner of person He was whose life they *profess* to record; and especially, and for the present exclusively, *according to Himself*. Whether we should receive what He says of Himself, and how to account for what He says of Himself, are questions which we hold in reserve. Meantime ours is a simple inquiry, in which all the readers of the Gospels can accompany us, and on the substance of which they are as competent as any writer to form a correct judgment.

The authenticity of the Gospels not assumed.

1. We first hear the voice of Jesus of Nazareth when, at the age of twelve, He went up to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary to the feast of the Passover. We can imagine the deep interest with which He trod the courts of the temple for the first time. That His thoughts were not merely such thoughts as might be common to young intelligent Galileans, we know, for He claimed an interest in the place which was shared by no other. That Joseph and Mary should have gone a day's journey on their return to Nazareth

Luke ii.  
42—52.

First visit  
of Jesus to  
the Temple.

before they discovered that Jesus was not with the other youths of the company with which they travelled, occasions no surprise to those who know the customs of homeward travel of Jewish worshippers. To us the great significance of the incident lies in what followed. Jesus was found by Joseph and Mary where they might have expected to find Him, but did not, sitting in the midst of the doctors, probably in one of those apartments of the temple which were used as schools of the Rabbis, listening to the doctors and asking them questions. And Mary said to Him, in words of reproach, to which he was unaccustomed, 'Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.' The defence of Jesus was in these words: 'How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' Or, as in the Revised Version, 'Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?' It matters nothing which translation we adopt. The peculiarity of the answer remains: *My Father's* house, *My Father's* business. 'Thy father,' Mary had said, using the language of their home. 'Thy father and I have sought Thee.' '*My* Father,' said Jesus. I am here in My Father's house! Wist ye not that I should be found here?

My Father!

John v. 13.

Thus early did Jesus use the language which, at a later period, was charged against Him as involving a claim of equality with God.

Matt. iii. 15.

2. The reply of Jesus to John the Baptist when he said to Him, 'I have need to be baptized of Thee and comest Thou to me,' deserves attention. It implied that John had reason for his demurrer. Jesus did not say, 'Why should not I be baptized as well as others?'

Baptism of Jesus.

But, 'Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' He thus avowed or acknowledged a fundamental distinction between Himself and others. The baptism of John was a baptism of repentance, but here was One whom John believed to 'need no repentance.' Why should He be baptized? Jesus did not question the rightness of the Baptist's judgment in the matter, but asked, notwithstanding, that He might be baptized. And the distinction, of which both John and Jesus were conscious, was fully justified by the mysterious event which, according to three of the Gospels, occurred on the occasion.

Matt. iii.  
16—17.  
Mark i.  
10—11.  
Luke iii. 22.

3. Three Gospels tell us that immediately after the Baptism Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness. The only point in this story which concerns us at present is the statement that the Tempter said, 'If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread:' 'If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence:' and that Jesus is in no wise startled by the suggestion that He was, or that it was claimed for Him that He was, the Son of God—and that He uttered no such word as 'Far be it from me that I should call myself the Son of God.'

Matt. iv.  
Mark i.  
Luke iv.

'If Thou be  
the Son of  
God.'

In the minds of the writers of the Gospels the words of the tempter are evidently connected with the words which were heard at the Baptism. 'A voice came from heaven,' they record, 'saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' And, as if the devil had heard the words, or knew that they had been spoken, he says to Jesus, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones become loaves.'

What may or may not be the meaning of the title, 'Son of God,' remains to be considered; but, whatever it was, Jesus did not reject it in His replies to the tempter.

4. The story of the 'finding' of Jesus by His first disciples is significant in its minutest details. John the Baptist said, in the hearing of two of His disciples, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' The two followed Him, and abode with Him that day. Of the converse of Jesus with them we have no record. But its impression was deep and permanent. One of them said to his brother Simon, 'We have found the Messias.' And when Simon was brought to Jesus, 'Jesus beheld him and said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona. Thou shalt be called Cephas"'—which, being Grecianised, is 'Peter.' This is the beginning of a self-revelation, of which it was afterwards remarked that 'He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man.' Very soon after, the same wondrous faculty was manifested. Philip, who had heard the call, 'Follow me,' found Nathanael, and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses, in the law, and the prophets did write—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.' These men of Galilee were evidently kindred souls, men who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. They had often spoken one to another of Him of whom Moses and the prophets had written. But it was evidently a surprise to Nathanael to be told that this great Coming One should be found in a son of Joseph, a man of Nazareth. It was a 'terrible anticlimax' of all his hopes and expectations. Nazareth was only a league distant from his own Cana, and he could not imagine this little neighbouring village

'The Lamb  
of God.'

John i.  
42-51.

John ii. 25.

A wondrous  
faculty  
revealed.

Nathanael.

Eldersheim.

enjoying so lofty a destiny. No prophecy had ever assigned to it so important a part. But Nathanael's surprise was of another kind, when Jesus, on his coming to Him, said, 'Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!' 'Whence knowest Thou me?' he said, at once. Could any one have told Jesus of him or his manner of life? Not so. 'Before that Philip called thee,' said Jesus, 'when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.' Nathanael saw in these words the proof of a supernatural knowledge which Jesus had of him. 'Not only does he recognise that he was seen by Jesus in a place where His natural sight could not reach, but he feels that this stranger's eye has penetrated him to his inmost depths, and that it is only in virtue of this penetration that He can give him the title with which He has just accosted him.' Then was uttered the first great (recorded) confession of the personal dignity and Messianic office of Jesus Christ—'Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.' The incredulity with which he had received the announcement that a Nazarene was the Messiah, gave place to a faith which time and further knowledge only strengthened.

Jesus accepted the honour, whatever it was, which was implied in the words of Nathanael, and said, 'Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.' We need not determine, so far as our present purpose is concerned, the exact meaning of all these words. But the ascending and descending of the angels upon the Son

Godet *in loco.*

Nathanael's confession.

Reference  
to Jacob's  
vision.

of Man cannot refer to the ministry of angels to Christ Himself. It is impossible not to see in the words a reference to Jacob's vision at Bethel. As the ladder was the medium of communication between heaven and earth, so would Jesus have His disciples to understand that He was the Mediator between heaven and earth. It is He that has opened heaven for the descent of angels to minister to men, and for the descent likewise of all heavenly blessings of which angels may be regarded, not only as the ministers, but as the symbols.

We do not suppose that Nathanael and Philip and the others understood the full meaning of the words of Jesus, but they *felt* that they involved claims and powers of a very extraordinary character; all the more extraordinary that they were uttered by a countryman who had but recently emerged from the obscurity of a Galilean village. Nor do we suppose that they understood fully and clearly all that was implied in their own words—in the titles with which they hailed Him as the Messiah. Godet discriminates wisely when he says: ‘The term *Son of God* expresses, in the mouth of Nathanael, the feelings, still very vague, it is true, but immediately resulting from what has just passed, of an exceptional relation between Jesus and God. But vague as this impression is, it is nevertheless rich and full, like everything which is matter of feeling, more even, perhaps, than if it were already reduced to a dogmatic formula. As Luthardt observes, “Nathanael’s faith will never possess *more* than it embraces at this moment”—the living person of Jesus. It will only be able to possess it more distinctly. The gold-seeker puts his hand on an ingot; when he has coined it he has it better, but not

*In loco.*

more. The two titles complete one another—*Son of God* bears on the relation of Jesus to God; *King of Israel* on his relation to the chosen people. The second title is the logical consequence of the first. The personage who lives in so intimate a relation to God, can only be, as is alleged, *the King of Israel*, the Messiah. This second title corresponds to that of *Israelite indeed*, with which Jesus had saluted Nathanael. The faithful subject has recognised and salutes his King. Jesus is conscious that He has just taken the first step in a new career—that of miraculous signs—and His answer breathes the most elevated feeling of the greatness of the occasion.'

Son of God  
and King of  
Israel.

In this brief record of the first gathering of disciples to Jesus, we find the three titles of Messiah, Son of God, and Son of Man.

The three  
titles.

5. The disciples had not to wait long before they saw one of those 'greater things' of which their new-found Master had spoken. In Nathanael's own village, Cana of Galilee, Jesus turned water into wine at a marriage feast. And in this 'beginning of miracles' John says that Jesus 'manifested forth His glory,' and the faith of His disciples was confirmed. 'The phrase, *His glory*, distinguishes profoundly between Jesus and all the divine messengers who had wrought similar wonders before Him. There was seen in their miracles the glory of Jehovah; those of Jesus reveal His own, by testifying, in concert with the revelation contained in His sayings, to His filial relation.'

John ii. 11.

Exod. xvi. 7.

That Jesus should have chosen a marriage feast for beginning to 'manifest forth His glory' was not the

See the  
Author's  
'Work and  
Conflict,'  
p. 101 *et seq.*

Significance  
of His first  
miracle.

The family  
claimed.

result of accident; nor can we reverently imagine it possible that, in any sense, the choice was inconsiderate or unintentional. With the history of the church before us, we see in it a prophetic protest against the ascetic habits and monastic vows which have claimed to themselves a higher religious character than can belong to the relations and pursuits of common life. We see in the miracle more than an act of kindness to the individuals whose nuptials were celebrated in that cottage home in Cana. We see in it the rendering of transcendent honour to that state which was 'instituted of God in the time of man's innocence.' The Founder of the kingdom of heaven on earth did not begin His work by teaching His followers to break every tie of earthly kindred, and neglect every earthly duty, and flee into solitudes, where they might live the life avowedly of saints, but more truly of worms or of wild beasts. He laid the foundation of His kingdom in that humble household for whose benefit He turned water into wine. Then and there did He claim the family as the first and special sphere for the growth and exercise of the Christian graces and virtues. He did not abandon human connections and interest and joys to the principedom of His rival—the devil—but took possession of them for the glory of God. The social life of man was not destroyed, but sanctified, by the Lord from heaven. And in this, as well as in the mighty power of the miracle, He 'manifested forth His glory.'

John ii.  
—17.

6. At His first Passover in Jerusalem Jesus asserted His authority in a remarkable manner. 'He found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting.' These



Temple-bazaars, held ostensibly for the accommodation of the worshippers, were scenes of shameful abuses. Josephus and the Rabbis give terrible pictures of the avarice and corruption of the infamous High-Priest family, under whose patronage and for whose profit they were held. When Jesus entered the Temple there were many Galilean pilgrims there who must have known Him. 'They would follow Him and watch what He did. Nor were they disappointed. He inaugurated His mission by fulfilling the prediction concerning Him who was to be Israel's refiner and purifier. Scarce had He entered the Temple-porch, and trod the court of the Gentiles, than He drove thence what profanely defiled it. There was not a hand lifted, not a word spoken to arrest Him, as He made the scourge of small cords (even this not without significance), and with it drove out of the Temple both the sheep and the oxen; not a word said, not a hand raised, as He poured into their receptacles the changers' money, and overthrew their tables. His presence awed them, His words awakened even their consciences. They knew only too well how true His denunciations were. And behind Him was gathered the wondering multitude, that could not but sympathise with such bold, right royal, and Messianic vindication of Temple sanctity from the nefarious traffic of a hated, corrupt, and avaricious priesthood.'

On His first visit to the Temple He had said, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' Or, 'Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?' And on this, His first public visit to the Temple, He says, 'Make not My Father's house an house of merchandise.' And throughout His ministry,

See 'Eidersheim's Life of Jesus, the Messiah,' Vol. I., 367, *et seq.*

Matt. iii. 1-3.

Cleansing of the Temple.

Eidersheim, Vol. I. 373, 4.

My Father's House.

as we shall see, He called God His Father, in a sense peculiar to Himself.

John iii. 2.  
(Revised  
Version.)

Nicodemus.

Edersheim.

John iii. 11.

Revised  
Version.  
The Son of  
Man 'in  
heaven.'

7. The conversation with Nicodemus, recorded in the third chapter of John, took place during this visit to Jerusalem, and it is one great self-revelation of Christ. 'Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that Thou doest except God be with him.' This 'man of the Pharisees' seems to speak for others as well as for himself. He was not alone in seeing in the 'signs' wrought by Jesus the evidence of a Divine Mission. But he was alone, though we commonly associate his name with a charge of timidity, in the courage which led him to Jesus, even 'by night.' 'It must have been a mighty power of conviction, to break down prejudice so far as to lead this old Sanhedrist to acknowledge a Galilean, untrained in the schools, as a teacher come from God, and to repair to Him for direction on, perhaps, the most delicate and important point in Jewish Theology.' And that was, as we infer from the words in which Christ 'answered' him, 'the kingdom of God.' And Nicodemus soon found that the ideas commonly entertained by the sect to which he belonged, and by the Jewish nation as well, were fundamentally wrong. But the wonder which he expressed only elicited from Jesus an averment of His authority and capacity to speak as a 'teacher come from God':—'Verily, verily, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things. And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even

the Son of Man which is in heaven.' Opinion differs as to who they were whom Jesus associated with Himself when He said '*We*.' That of Godet seems the most natural:—The *We* are Jesus Himself as the principal personage; then His forerunner, who had been associated with Him in the revelation at His baptism; and His disciples, whom He was already preparing to become the organs of this new doctorate. It is natural to hold that Jesus was not alone when He spoke thus, and that one or more of His disciples were present at the interview.

The '*We*' was soon dropped, however, and Jesus speaks for and of Himself, in words which appear mystical and even paradoxical. He speaks of Himself as ascending to heaven, and descending from heaven, and as being in heaven at that moment while there on earth conversing with Nicodemus. The general meaning of His words seems to be: '*No one has ascended to heaven so as to be able to tell you of it *de visu*, except Him who has come down from it to live with you as a man, and who, even here below, remains there always.*'

Heaven is both a state and a place. As a state it is essentially communion with God, the spiritual vision of God, and of all things in God. As a place it is some sphere or other of the universe which is resplendent with all the glory of the manifestation of God. '*No man hath ascended to heaven*' signifies '*No one hath attained to communion with God and to the immediate knowledge of divine things, nor can reveal them to others.*' '*He that descended*' implies more than a divine mission: it includes the notion of pre-existence. The term '*Son of Man*' gives prominence to this Heavenly Revealer's abasement and love.

'*I*' instead  
of '*We*.'

Godet.

Heaven a  
place and  
state.

See Matt.  
xi. 27.

The words 'which is in heaven' imply that Jesus led two lives in parallel lines—an earthly life and a heavenly life. He lived continually in His Father. This was His heavenly life. And while living thus in the Father, He gave Himself unceasingly to men in a life which was truly human. Such was this 'Teacher come from God,' *according to Himself*.

vv. 16–21.

So Eder-  
shem.

Godet.

John iii.  
16–21.

Words of  
John of  
Jesus?

The verses which follow are supposed by some to be, not a continuation of Christ's teaching of Nicodemus, but a comment by the Evangelist, the outburst of his own thoughts as he recalled a conversation of which he was probably an ear-witness. But, as Godet says, 'the coherence of all the parts is too close to admit the idea of a distinction between the part belonging to Jesus and that due to the Evangelist. Either the whole is an artificial composition, or the whole also should be regarded as the summary of a real conversation. We say the summary, for we certainly do not possess the complete report. The visit of Nicodemus lasted, of course, longer than the few minutes necessary to read the account of it. John has transmitted to us in a few salient utterances the quintessence of the communications made by Jesus in the case before us. So much is indicated by the vague transitions expressed by the simple *and*. We behold a few peaks, but not the entire chain.'

The word *for* in verse sixteen cannot indicate a transition from the teaching of Jesus to the commentary of the historian, but quite the contrary. Besides, the words which follow are a most natural sequence to those which go before. 'If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' The doctrine of the new birth, which takes place on earth, and is a matter

of earthly experience, was received with wonder and incredulity. The greatest of 'heavenly things,' that which is the chiefest of heavenly mysteries, Jesus now revealed in saying, 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.' He had already connected eternal life with believing in Himself, the Son of Man, 'lifted up.' He now traces it to its fountain in the infinite love of the Father. He had called Himself the Son of Man, to be 'lifted up' for the life of the world. He now calls Himself the only begotten Son of God, who had come to reveal and accomplish the purpose of the Father's love to the world. The whole is in keeping, part with part, and with the position assumed at other times by this 'Teacher come from God.'

'Heavenly things'—  
what?

'The only  
begotten.'

8. Returning from Jerusalem to Galilee, Jesus must needs go through Samaria; and the traditional Jacob's well will ever be memorable in Christian story, as the scene of a conversation in which He revealed Himself with more directness and explicitness than was His wont when addressing crowds of wondering but unbelieving Jews. To the woman who came thither to draw water, Jesus said, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.' In the Old Testament, a perennial spring was designated, in figurative language, 'living water,' in contrast to water accumulated in a cistern. The water in Jacob's well was in this sense living water. And the woman seeing, or seeming to see, no spiritual meaning in the words of Christ, said, 'Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with,

John iv.  
7—25.

The woman  
of Samaria.  
John iv. 10.

See Gen.  
xxvi. 19,  
Lev. xiv. 5  
(Rev. Ver.),  
and  
Jer. ii. 13.

Living  
water.

Jesus *gives*  
eternal life.

John iv. 10.

vv. 17, 18.

John i.  
18, 19.

True wor-  
ship.

Revised  
Version.

and the well is deep ; from whence then hast thou that living water ?' Jesus replied, ' Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again : but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.' In the woman's rejoinder there may have been a ' mixture of ill-apprehension and rising faith.' But we are concerned, not with the woman, but with Christ. And here we find a man who, to the outward eye, was nothing more than an ordinary traveller, wearied with his journey, hungry, and thirsty, waiting for the food which his fellow-travellers had gone in quest of, and meantime asking for the refreshment of a draught of water ;—and this man, this Jewish wayfarer, speaks of himself as having power to *give eternal life*. No wonder that the woman was startled and thrown into a state of mental confusion. But she would have understood the mystery if she had known ' who it was ' that was speaking to her. And this she soon discovered. His knowledge of her history, a knowledge, she felt, which must have been supernatural, produced on her mind an impression not unlike that of Nathanael in similar circumstances : ' Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet ?' And He soon did a prophet's work ; ' Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.' Well may one exclaim—' What a treasure cast to such a soul !' But is it not

after the manner of this Great Teacher? 'I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' The woman of Samaria was a 'babe' only in the sense of being ignorant, and by this time becoming teachable. But even she could associate such teaching, and such prophecy of a time when all nations should be alike before God, and should be privileged to offer to God, without regard to place, the only worship He requires and accepts, with the advent of the Messiah. And Jesus rewarded her growing faith and intelligence with the explicit announcement: 'I that speak unto thee am He.' In doing so there was no inconsistency with His conduct on some other occasions. Jesus had no fear, as He stood by Jacob's well, of calling forth in this woman a world of dangerous illusions like those which in the case of the Jews attached to the name of Messiah. 'The difference of soils explains the difference of seeds which the hand of Jesus drops into them.'

'I am He.'

Matt. viii. 1,  
xvi. 20, etc.

Godet.

The conversation with Nicodemus and that with the woman of Samaria discover to us the wisdom with which Jesus adapted His teaching to His hearers, and at the same time the unity of the representations which He gave of Himself and of His ministry. 'With Nicodemus, He started from the idea which filled every Pharisee's heart, that of the kingdom of God, and deduced therefrom the most rigorous practical consequences. He knew that He had to deal with a man accustomed to the discipline of the law. Then He unveiled to him the most elevated truths of the kingdom of heaven, by connecting them with a striking Old Testament type, and thus contrasting them with the corresponding features of the Pharisaic

Godet on  
John,  
Vol. II. 119.

Nicodemus  
and the  
Samaritan  
woman  
compared.

programme. Here, on the contrary, with a woman destitute of all Scriptural training, He takes His point of departure from the commonest thing imaginable, the water of the well. He suddenly exalts it by a bold antithesis, to the idea of that eternal life which quenches for ever the thirst of the human heart. Spiritual aspiration thus awakened in her becomes the internal prophecy to which He attaches His new revelations, and thus reaches that teaching on true worship which corresponds as directly to the peculiar prepossessions of the woman, as the revelation of heavenly things corresponded to the inmost thoughts of Nicodemus. Before the latter He unveils Himself as the only-begotten Son, but this while avoiding the title of "Christ." With the woman He boldly uses this term; but He does not dream of initiating into the mysteries of incarnation and redemption a soul which is yet only at the first elements of religious life and knowledge. The resemblance between the two narratives rests on the analogy which prevailed between the two meetings; on both sides a soul wholly of the earth standing in contact with a heavenly mind, which labours to raise it to its own level. This likeness in the situations sufficiently explains the relations between the two dialogues, the diversity of which is quite as remarkable as the resemblance.'

9. From Samaria Jesus goes into Galilee and does not fail, in His own country, to make known, directly and indirectly, who and what He was. A centurion sends the elders of the Jews to Him with an earnest request that He would come and heal his servant, and when Jesus was on His way, he sends this further message: 'Lord, trouble not Thyself; for I am not

Accenturion.  
Matt. viii.  
5-13.



worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof; wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,' as in this Gentile, said Jesus. 'Although the centurion was an ordinary man, and a man in a dependent position, he had subordinates through whom he could act without always going to the place. Could not Jesus, who stood far above him in the hierarchy of being, having the powers of the invisible world at His disposal, make use, if He pleased, of a similar power?' So Godet. More briefly and pointedly—Even as his soldiers obeyed the centurion's word of command, so would disease obey Christ's word of command; the powers of nature were as subject to the will and word of Christ as his hundred men were to the centurion. Jesus accepted the homage thus rendered to Him, and commended the faith which it expressed.

The authority of the centurion and of Jesus.

10. Other miracles were wrought at this time, in which there appeared more than a Divine power which might have been delegated. A leper says to Him, 'If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.' And Jesus does not say, 'Not as I will, but as God wills.' He says, 'I will, be thou clean.' Moses lost the great honour of entering Canaan at the head of the redeemed host of Israel, because he spake 'unadvisedly with his lips,' when working a miracle which God gave him to work. Could anything be more unadvised than for a mere agent in performing a miracle to say, 'I will'?

Matt. viii.  
2-3.  
'I will.'

Numb. xx.  
10-11.  
Ps. cvi. 33.

Matt. viii. 9.

Matt. ix.  
2—6.  
Compare  
Mark ii.  
5—11.  
Luke v.  
20—24.  
Luke vii. 49.

Forgiving  
sin.

Arise and  
walk.

But that Jesus did not err is attested by the fact that the leper was cleansed. The personal power which He claimed was illustrated by the centurion who asked Him to heal his servant, by a reference to his own authority: 'I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh'—'speak Thou the word only and my servant shall be healed.'

To a palsied man Jesus said, 'Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee.' 'Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies?' the people reasoned in their hearts; 'who can forgive sins but God only?' When Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said to them, 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins—He saith to the sick man—'I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed.' And the man arose and departed to his house.

No one will dare to charge Jesus with evading the question of the people, or with sanctioning, by His silence, impressions respecting Himself which He knew to be wrong. It were easy to say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee': for there was no means of detecting the falsehood, if falsehood it was. Not so easy to say, 'Arise and walk'; for the claim which it implied could be tested at once. Jesus *did* say, 'Arise and walk,' and the result showed that He was not acting without Divine authority when He said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' The people were right in saying, 'Who can forgive sins but God only?' But the miracle proved that He, the Son of Man had power on earth

to forgive sins, and was guilty of no blasphemy. The people were left to draw their own inference; and all that we know is that they were amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, 'We have seen strange things to-day.' It was not the miracle that filled them with fear as well as amazement. It was the manner of the man, and His mysterious assumptions on performing it.

A mysterious assumption.

11. During this visit to Galilee, Jesus 'went to Nazareth,' where He had been brought up, and He entered, as His custom was, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 'And there was delivered unto Him the book of the prophet Isaiah. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down: and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.'

Luke iv.  
16-21.  
Rev. v.

Ch. lxi.

This day fulfilled.

We have no occasion to consider, what is of itself a matter of much interest, the manner of worship and of instruction in the Jewish synagogues of this period. This has been done lately, with a full knowledge of the subject, by Dr. Edersheim, who has likewise explained fully the differences between the words of Isaiah in his sixty-first chapter, and the words as translated by Christ into the Aramaic, the then vernacular of Christ and the Galileans, and the words

The life and times of Jesus, the Messiah, 3rd ed., Vol. I., Ch. x. & xi.

finally reported by Luke in the Greek of the Septuagint. We have to do with the substance of the incident, and its bearing on the claims of Christ.

‘We take it for granted that what had so lately taken place in Cana, at only four miles distance, or, to speak more accurately, in Capernaum, had become known in Nazareth. It raised to the highest pitch of expectancy the interest and curiosity previously awakened by the reports which the Galileans had brought from Jerusalem, and by the general fame which had spread about Jesus. They were now to test whether their countrymen would be equal to the occasion, and do in His own city what they had heard had been done for Capernaum. To any ordinary man the return to Nazareth in such circumstances must have been an ordeal. Not so to the Christ, who, in utter self-forgetfulness, had only this one aim of life—to do the will of Him that sent Him. And so His bearing that day in the synagogue is itself evidence that while *in*, He was not *of*, that time.’

This was made especially evident by the extraordinary announcement — ‘This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.’ The Nazarenes wondered at the gracious words that were spoken by Jesus, and they wondered still more, and not with pleasure, at the presumption of their humble neighbour, whom they had known all His life as ‘Joseph’s son,’ in declaring that He was the object of Isaiah’s prophecy. That presumption is what concerns us. Seven hundred years before, the greatest prophet of the nation had written, not of himself but of some one that was to come in another age, ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.’ The words were well known to

High  
expectancy.

‘Joseph’s  
son.’

all who waited for consolation in Israel. They were one of three passages in which the ancient synagogue found mention of the Holy Ghost in connection with the promised redemption. Very sacred they were—words which could find fulfilment only in the advent of the Messiah. And now Jesus, the carpenter, says, ‘Isaiah spoke of Me; the ages have waited for My coming; and now I enter on My mission to heal the broken-hearted and to preach deliverance to the captives.’ This He said with all deliberateness and seriousness, having first closed the book and given it again into the hands of the synagogue minister, from whom He had received it. Lowly as was His condition in life, and lowly as His spirit had ever been, He shrank not from asserting that His coming had been expected from the days of Isaiah, and that He was now set apart and anointed to fulfil a divine purpose of grace towards mankind. In fact, He was *the Messiah!* And in making this announcement His words struck at the root of the carnal expectations which the Jews of His time cherished. Truly, as Dr. Edersheim says, it was the most un-Jewish discourse for a Jewish Messiah of those days, with which to open His ministry. The result presented in anticipation an epitome of His earthly history. He came unto His own and His own received Him not.

Jesus the  
carpenter,  
the  
Messiah!

12. The time had now come when Jesus must gather around Him a few followers to be His personal and constant attendants, and His witnesses to the world. And this He does after a manner which reminds us of the call of Isaiah to the prophetic office. Walking by the sea of Galilee, ‘He saw two brothers, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the

Personal  
attendants.

Matt. iv.  
18-19.

sea, for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me. And they straightway left their nets and followed Him.' On the same occasion James and John left their father and their boat and followed Jesus.

John i.  
40—41.

Luke v.  
1—11.

Of the circumstances in which these four young fishermen, who had already recognised in Jesus the promised Messiah, were summoned to become His personal attendants, we have a fuller account in the Third Gospel. The two boats of Andrew and Simon and of James and John had returned to the shore after a fruitless all-night toil. At the request of Jesus one of the boats was put out a little from the shore, and from the deck of this boat Jesus taught the people who stood on the land. Then He said to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.' To expect a draught of fishes after the experience of the night was to hope against hope. But the 'word' of Jesus was reason enough why the attempt should be made. And the result overwhelmed Peter with wonder. 'When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, and said, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' The sons of Zebedee were equally amazed. And to Peter, prostrate at His knees, Jesus said, 'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.'

vv. 6—7.  
Peter  
prostrate.

His worship  
accepted.

Disciples of  
Doctors.

Both the common and the uncommon in this narrative should be noted. Up to a certain point Jesus may be regarded as doing only what other teachers did. Ancient prophets, such as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, gathered around them circles of disciples known to us as schools of the prophets. The doctors of the law in Christ's own time, such as Hillel, Shammai, and Gamaliel, had their special followings. And Jesus, as 'the Prophet of Nazareth,' may be re-

garded as only following a common example, when He called these four Galileans to leave their fishing boats and to wait on His teaching. But even thus regarded, we are struck with the form of the call—‘I will make you fishers of men.’ This neighbour of theirs, of no higher rank than their own, with no better education than their own, assumes a strange authority, and avows a strange power, of which at the time they could have but the dimmest perception—‘I—I—will make you fishers of men.’

So far, however, we might regard the whole affair as parallel to the methods of other leaders of men. But what shall we say to the words and act of Peter, and the reply of Jesus: ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord?’ ‘Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.’ The scene reminds us of various passages both in the Old Testament and in the New, but more especially of the grand revelation of God in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, and of the experiences of Job. When Isaiah saw the vision of the Divine Majesty in which he heard the Seraphim saying, ‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts,’ he exclaimed, ‘Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.’ When Job had listened to sublime descriptions of the Divine greatness, majesty, and power, he said, ‘I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.’ Now, when Peter saw a mighty work which revealed to him, he believed, the presence of God, he exclaimed, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.’

We have no difficulty in understanding how the vision of Isaiah should lead him to exclaim, ‘I am

But—the words of Peter.

Ex. xx. 19.  
Judg. xiii. 22.

Job xl. 4.  
xlii. 3–6.

Isaiah vi.

Old Testament parallels.

undone, because I am a man of unclean lips,' for he had heard the words, 'Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.' But we do not so readily perceive the connection between the cause and the effect in the case of Job and of Peter. In Job we have the Divine omnipotence and majesty contrasted with man's impotence and littleness. And the effect on Job's mind was not, as we should expect, merely reverence and awe, nor even mere confession and abasement as being 'less than nothing' in God's sight, but a distinct and overwhelming sense of his sinfulness. His exclamation was not, 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him,' but 'Behold I am vile.' We can only explain it by the fact, for fact it seems to be, that the strongest and most sensitive link that connects man with God is *conscience*. It is this that vibrates soonest to the announcement of God's presence. It is not the intellect, nor the imagination, nor even the heart, that first recognises and realises that 'God is here'—it is the conscience. It is on the same principle that we explain the feeling and cry of Peter.

How or why the young fisherman rushed to the conclusion that he was in the presence of God, however, does not appear very obvious. Such a draught of fishes, in the circumstances, was very marvellous. But might it not be a mere coincidence, though a very strange one: or, if a miracle, might it not be such a miracle as Divinely-commissioned men have often wrought? But Peter saw in it much more. He felt that he was in the presence of no mere man. And, in the spirit of Job, Isaiah, Daniel, and others, he threw himself on his knees before the Mysterious One, and said, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' What concerns us most is the response of Jesus. He

Whence the  
impression  
on Peter's  
mind?



was not startled by the act and words of Peter. When, years after this, Cornelius fell down at the feet of Peter, and seemed to offer him homage, the Apostle said, at once, 'Stand up, I myself also am a man.' When John fell down at the feet of a heavenly messenger to worship him, the angel said to him, 'See thou do it not: I am a fellow-servant with thee and with thy brethren that hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God.' Was Jesus less sensitive to the Divine honour than the apostle and the angel? And yet He did not say, 'Stand up, for I myself also am a man,' or, 'See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant; worship God.' He stood upright before Peter, and, while Peter was on his knees, overwhelmed with a sense of his unworthiness, He addressed words of comfort to the prostrate, trembling man—'Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' A 'Fear not' which reminds us of the comfort that was given to Isaiah when he was similarly overwhelmed—'Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged'; and which reminds us, too, of many words of comfort which Isaiah's pen was after that honoured to write, such as 'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee.' The parallel between the circumstances in which Isaiah received his prophetic commission and those in which Peter received his apostolic commission is too manifest to be accidental. And the parallel between the action of Jesus on the latter occasion and the action ascribed to Him in the Book of Revelation, is equally manifest. The seer in the Isle of Patmos had a vision of the Son of Man in His glory, when 'His countenance was as when the sun shineth in his strength.' And he writes, 'When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me saying, Fear

Acts x. 26.

Rev. xix. 10.  
Rev. Ver.'Worship  
God.'

Ch. vi. 7.

Ch. xliii. 1.  
See Dan. x.  
7—12.  
Parallel  
between  
prophet and  
apostle.Rev. i.  
16--18.

not : I am the first and the last, and the Living One ; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.' Marvelous as were the words which the seer heard, they were not more marvellous *in substance* than were those which the Son of Man addressed to Peter when he said 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord'—'Fear not, for from henceforth thou shalt catch men.'

John v.  
1-13.

At the Pool  
of Bethesda

Matt. xii.  
Mark ii.  
Luke vi.  
Revised  
Version.  
Making  
Himself  
equal with  
God.

13. On His return to Jerusalem, Jesus performed a notable miracle in healing a man who had had an infirmity thirty and eight years. 'Arise,' He said to him, 'take up thy bed and walk.' The man did so. But being the Sabbath day the Jews charged the man and his healer with breaking the Sabbath law, and Jesus defended Himself on grounds different from those on which He rested His defence on other occasions. It was at first only in one sentence: 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work.' [Revised version, 'My Father worketh even until now, and I work.'] This defence only made things worse. 'For this cause the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.'

Nonmistake!

Nothing could have been easier, if the people misunderstood Him or drew an unwarranted inference from His words, than for Jesus to correct the mistake. He would have done it with all the eager zeal with which Paul and Barnabas rushed in among the idolators of Lycaonia, saying, 'Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you.' But instead of this He confirmed the impression His

Acts xiv.  
13-15.

first words had produced, and revealed Himself in terms which disclose a mysterious relation between 'the Father' and 'the Son'—a relation altogether different from that which subsists between the master and the servant, or between the inspiring God and the inspired Prophet. His words should be quoted at length, and some of them must. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing; for whatsoever things He doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth: and greater works than these will He shew Him, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honour the Son even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself: and He gave Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment.'

John v.  
19 - 29.  
Revised  
version.

The Father  
and the  
Son.

The dead  
shall hear.

No angel  
could speak  
thus.

Subordina-  
tion and  
equality.

See Dr. Pyc  
Smith's  
'Scripture  
Testimony  
to the  
Messiah' on  
the whole  
passage  
Vol. I,  
143-153.

We hear these words with amazement. What mortal man, the highest and most privileged, could have uttered them? Yea, what angel that stands nearest the throne could have presumed to speak thus of himself? It is not needful that I should attempt a full exposition of the words of Christ. The impression which they produced on the mind of His hearers, and which they produce on ours, is enough. The terms of subordination which He uses—'I can do nothing from myself'—'The Father hath committed judgment unto the Son'—'The Father hath given to the Son to have life in Himself,' are intelligible if we accept it as true that the Son of God took upon Him the form of a servant and came to minister. But, understand them how we may, they must be interpreted consistently with those other terms which assert unequivocally the equality of 'the Son' with 'the Father': 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work'—'As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth whom He will, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.' Even as it respects those powers or prerogatives which the Father is represented as giving or communicating to the Son, the maxim will hold that whatsoever is given must be given according to the capacity of the receiver. 'It is manifest that the Being who is competent to such a function as the giving of everlasting life to the multitude which no man can number, must have original powers of the highest kind. It is the Father's will to constitute Him the Fountain of Divine life to mankind, *because* He is, in HIMSELF, adequate to such a function.' The same remark applies to the *committing* of the final judgment to the Son. 'Such a work as this could no more be delegated to an inferior intelligence than

could the government of the universe. It requires the highest attributes of the Deity for its performance.'

14. For convenience sake we may cluster together several noticeable assertions respecting Himself which we find in the twelfth of Matthew. Greater than the prophet Jonas—greater than King Solomon—are claims which would seem strange on the lips of a Nazarene carpenter if they were not vastly transcended by other claims. Defending His conduct with reference to the Sabbath, He said, 'In this place is one greater than the temple.' Even if we accept a different reading and say 'a greater thing than the temple,' the meaning must be that *He* was greater than the temple. Now what could He mean by comparing Himself with the temple, and calling Himself the greater of the two? Spirit is greater than matter, we know; and on this ground it might be asserted that every man who entered the temple was greater than the temple. But Jesus speaks of Himself, not of all men, and defends His action on the ground that if David was justified in what he did when 'he entered into the house of God,' much more was He in that *He* was greater than the temple. There seems no natural ground for any comparison between Jesus and the temple, but we have a key to what otherwise it would be difficult to understand, in words used on another occasion: 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.' These words were not forgotten by His enemies, and were alleged against Him when He was arraigned before the Jewish Council. But He spoke, we are told, not of the material temple, the restoration of which had been begun by Herod forty

Some  
notable  
assertions,  
Matt. xii.  
41, 42.

Matt. xii. 6.

Greater  
than the  
Temple.

John ii. 19.

Matt. xxvi.  
61.

John ii.  
20, 21.

Heb. i. 3.

Jesus a  
Temple.

2 Chron. v.  
14.

and six years before, but of the temple of His body. In the original temple of the Jews there was the Shekinah, the manifestation of the Divine glory, and of the special presence of Him who is present everywhere. It was thus a type of that *body* in which, in the fulness of the times, He was manifested, who was the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. Jesus was in His own person a temple of God, a truer temple than that on which so much Herodian wealth had been expended, a truer temple even than that of which it is said that, at its dedication, the glory of the Lord filled the house of God. The comparison indicated by the words of Christ was, then, between temple and temple. And on this ground Jesus alleged that He was greater than that temple of which all around Him were proud. That His words were not understood occasions no wonder, any more than were the words in which He spoke of 'raising up' the temple of His body in three days. But Jesus did not use them unadvisedly; they were in harmony with all else that He said concerning Himself.

Lord of the  
Sabbath.  
Matt. xii. 8.  
The Revis-  
ers omit  
'even.'

Exod. xix.  
16-18.

Exod. xx.  
8-10.

15. On the same occasion Jesus said, 'The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.' His Lordship was exercised, I believe, not in abrogating the Sabbath, but in authoritatively declaring and exemplifying its true law. But what we have to do with at present is the strange, mysterious claim involved in any lordship over the Sabbath day by this Son of Man. Amid thunders and other august manifestations of the Divine presence which made the people tremble, the law was given. 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. . . . The seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah,

thy God.' And throughout ages which followed, prophets enforced this law, and denounced judgments on the neglect of it. But now, to a people who knew the awful sanctions which guarded this law, a Galilean, one of themselves, stands up, and says, 'I am Lord of the Sabbath day.' The oft recurring question might have sprung from the lips of Pharisee and Publican alike, Who art thou? And this is the question we have to answer to-day.

Who art thou?

16. The same question arises immediately when we hear Him say, as recorded in the same chapter, as He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples—'Behold My mother and My brothers. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.' '*My* Father,' not *the* Father, or *your* Father. On this we shall have more to say. At present, mark the way in which he separates Himself from His mother and His brothers, and offers to those who do the will of God the honour of being His brothers and His sisters. Those who stood around Him were His equals 'according to the flesh,' some His superiors. There were Scribes there who may have sat at the feet of Gamaliel, and even the humblest of His followers were in no wise outwardly inferior to Himself. And yet to be His brother or His sister they must regard as an honour and a privilege.

Matt. xii.  
43—50.  
Mark iii.  
31—35.  
Luke viii.  
19—21.

*My* brother  
and sister.

17. The significance of the 'Sermon on the Mount' is independent of all questions as to the time and place of its delivery. We read it now for the one purpose of endeavouring to realise what manner of man He was who spoke it, or what He thought Him-

The Sermon  
on the  
Mount.

Author  
of 'Super-  
natural  
Religion,'

Renan.

'Super-  
natural  
Religion,'  
II., 187.

self to be. We want, not to know what He taught, but to get an impression of the Teacher. As to the ethics of this great Sermon, unbelievers vie with believers in extolling them. 'The teaching of Jesus (says one) carried morality to the sublimest point attained or attainable by humanity.' 'The morality of the Gospel (says another) remains the most beautiful code of perfect life that any moralist has traced.' And the Teacher, they admit, rose to the standard of His own teaching. 'Surpassing in His sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Chakya-Mouni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied, though generally admirable, teaching of Socrates and Plato, and the whole round of Greek philosophers, He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles, so that the "Imitation of Christ" has become almost the final word in the preaching of His religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence.'

Matt. v. 17.

Not come to  
destroy.

Addressing his disciples and the multitude, Jesus said, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.' (The Revised Version says, 'Think not that I came.') What the words 'I am come,' and similar words often used by Jesus and about Jesus, mean we shall have other opportunities of considering. Why should it be needful for Jesus to say that He had not come to destroy the law or the prophets? Who could imagine a Jewish teacher doing anything so wicked? There must have been something in the character which Jesus assumed, or which he was popularly supposed to assume, which rendered it proper or necessary for Him to disavow antagonism to



the law and the prophets. It is evident that He did not stand, that He did not regard Himself as standing, in the succession of the prophets, the succession to which Elijah, Isaiah, and Malachi belonged. None of these, not the latest of the Old Testament, not even John the Baptist, had any occasion to say, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets.' The words could have no meaning except in the lips of One who stood outside the prophetic order and above it, one who had a place of His own, a place of authority, of lordship.

Mal. iv. 4.

Not of the prophetic order.

The announcement had been made by John the Baptist and by Jesus Himself that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. And we may imagine the confusion of thought into which many honest minds were thrown, by the prospect of the coming of the long-predicted and hoped for King of Heaven. What manner of person should He be? What changes should be wrought by His coming, in their national condition, in their national customs, in their relations to the past? Jesus, in whom many had already recognised the King, now speaks as the King, and says, 'Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.' The full meaning of these words time would open and reveal.

What changes by the King?

What probably strikes the ordinary reader of the Sermon on the Mount is the authoritative style of the Preacher. His hearers were impressed with it at the time. 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time that . . . But I say unto you.' Some six or seven times did Jesus thus speak. The prophets said 'Thus saith the Lord,' but Jesus said '*I* say unto you,' and used no other argument to justify either the

'I say unto you.'

Dr. James  
Morison.

abrogation or interpretation of ancient laws, or of what His hearers believed these laws to be—a style this which would have been presumptuous, and entirely unsuitable, in the lips of Jewish prophet or of Greek or Roman moralist. The emphasis, it has well been said, lies throughout on the pronoun *I*. ‘The intense self-consciousness of the Messiah, as the Messiah, and as realising all the dignity of His nature and office, is condensed into the pronoun.’

His own  
authority.

From the first sentence to the last we feel that there is something altogether unusual in the tone of this Teacher. He does not argue with us to prove the truth or rightness of what He says. He does not appeal for sanction to any that have gone before Him. When He does name them, it almost seems as if it were to set them aside. He does not even appeal to God for any sanction to His teaching. He stands throughout on His own authority. His words are those of a Royal Preacher—Royal in the highest sense of which the designation is capable. This Man *is* Royal. We feel it. He is a true King, a King of men, a King of men’s souls, a King whose authority extends to the conscience and to the innermost springs of thought and action in man’s breast. His words, moreover, are manifestly not the result of an effort—an effort to be profound, to be far-reaching, and to excel other men. They are the spontaneous, easy, utterance of His Royal intellect and will. If man never spake like this Man, it is because never before was there a man like this Man.

Matt. vii. 21.

It was in the end of the sermon that Jesus revealed Himself most fully—and that in words which must be read without abridgment: ‘Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of

Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.'

The final Judge.

This is not the only occasion on which Jesus proclaimed Himself the final Judge of men. He did so, we have seen, in words spoken in Jerusalem, as recorded in John v.; and towards the end of His ministry He said—'When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on the left.' And in His further prophecy of that great day He represents Himself as saying, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me,' 'Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it not to me.'

Matt. xxv.  
31.  
See Luke xii  
8, and ix, 23.

Matt. xxv.  
40, 45.

Those who saw Jesus arise from His pillow, and rebuking the winds and the sea, had not more reason to say, What manner of man is this? than had those who heard these words. Here is a Nazarene, dressed in the garb of a common Galilean, coming, apparently, of a common Galilean stock, uninstructed in the learning of the Jewish schools, with nothing to distinguish His form from that of any other man, standing among men of His own nation, apparently His equals or His superiors, declaring, not with frenzy as one who has lost his reason, but with sublime calmness and self-

A Mysteri-  
ous Being.

consciousness, that 'in that day,' the great day of final account, the destinies of His hearers shall be determined by Him. What manner of man is this? Not a mere preacher of righteousness; not a mere moral reformer, with intuitions of right and wrong, it might be, more enlightened and intense than those of any that have gone before, but a Mysterious Being who claims a personal right to lay down a law for mankind, and who declares that at the last He shall occupy the judgment seat of the universe.

John xiii. 13

'In My  
name.'

Strong as is the impression which Christ's words, read without note or comment, produce, it will become stronger if we meditate on some of these words one by one. '*Lord, Lord.*' It was right, He taught, that men should call Him Lord—but it was not enough. They must obey—they must do the will of His Father. '*In My name.*' Men would prophecy, preach, in His name; in His name they would cast out demons; in His name they would do wonderful works. His name would be the authority of all they did, and the source of all the power by which they did it. Does He not seem at least to put Himself thus in the place of God? '*These sayings of Mine.*' He makes *His* sayings the law of mankind. '*Whosoever*' doeth them is the wise man who builds on the rock; whosoever doeth them not is the foolish man who builds on sand. It is still the voice of authority. No lowliness of human rank can prevent His own consciousness of it; no peasant's garb can prevent others recognising and feeling it. Christ's '*whosoever*' both levels down and levels up. It brings within its sweep the proudest Pharisee and Sadducee of the land—the Herod within whose Galilee Jesus spoke, and the Pilate who represented the Roman Empire in the Castle of Antonia at

The highest  
and the  
lowest  
included.

Jerusalem. Or, going to the other end of the scale, this 'whosoever' brought within its sweep the poorest tiller of the soil, the poorest fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, and the poorest leper that hung on the skirts of the crowd that was now listening to the preacher's voice. In fact, the 'whosoever' of the Sermon on the Mount comprehended the 'all nations' of the later parable and prophecy. It is as comprehensive to-day as it was the day it was spoken. There is not a crowned head in Europe which it does not include; there is not a homeless wretch in Europe which it does not include. Who is this Man of Nazareth who asserts a claim of authority over mankind, a claim not bounded by time, an authority that shall be exercised when time ends and eternity begins?

Matt. xxv.  
32.

18. The parables of Jesus, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of the first Gospel, are 'all pitched in the same key.' The Kingdom of Heaven, of which Jesus speaks in many parables, is *His* Kingdom. He is the Son of Man who sows the good seed of God's truth, and the field in which He sows it is the world. The final decisions of the Great Day are, as elsewhere declared, in His hands. 'The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.' This He will do 'in the end of the world.' The men of the Nazarene Synagogue were astonished as they listened to His parables, and said, 'Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son?' Herod's solution of the question was natural enough to one whose conscience could not throw off the memory of a great crime: 'This is John the Baptist: He is risen from

Parables.  
Matt. xiii.

xiii. 41.

xiii. 40.

xiii. 54.

xiv. 1.

the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in Him.'

19. When Jesus sent forth the twelve on their first mission, he used words which He had used before, and which He repeated afterwards, which are full of significance as to what He claimed for Himself—'For My sake.' 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you . . . *for My sake.*' 'Ye shall be brought before kings and governors for My sake.' 'Ye shall be hated for My name's sake.' 'He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.' 'Every one that forsaketh houses . . . *for My sake.*' 'Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake?' 'All these things will they do unto you for My name's sake.'

'For My sake.'

Matt. x. 18.  
Matt. v. 11.  
Matt. x. 22.  
Matt. x. 39.  
Matt. xix.  
29.  
John xiii. 38.  
John xv. 21.

His name.

Matt. xviii. 5  
Matt. xviii.  
20.  
Matt. xxiv. 5

Connected with this expression is Christ's frequent reference to His *name*, and the place which he assigns to His *name*, not to the *word* Jesus, or the *word* Christ, but to Himself. 'He that receiveth a child in My name.' 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name.' 'Many shall come in My name.'

Thus Christ, and His followers after Him, seem at least to attach the same importance and dignity to His name which the current style of the Old Testament does to the name of Jehovah. If I refer to the usage of His followers, it is only because His words sanctioned it, and because they find their illustration in it. To 'bear the name' of Christ, was the great honour of the Apostolic Ministry. 'In His name' the miracles were wrought. 'Believing in His name' is uniformly represented as the condition of salvation. 'In His name the nations shall hope.' 'In His name' Divine institutions were to be administered. Christian obedience was to be rendered 'all in His

Acts ix. 15.

Acts iii. 16.  
John iii. 18.  
Matt. xii. 21  
Acts xix. 5.  
1. Cor. v. 4.  
Col. iii. 17.  
Acts ix. 14.  
2.

name.' It was the very designation of His primitive disciples that 'they called upon His name.' All the blessings of salvation were conferred on mankind 'in His name,' and 'on account of His name.' All this honour rendered, all this importance attached, to the *name* of Jesus of Nazareth—that is, to Himself, to His power and authority!

On the same occasion of His sending forth His twelve disciples, Jesus said, 'Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.' In these words Christ not only 'speaks out of the fulness of His consciousness of the power which He had with the Father, and of the harmony of the Father's will with His own'—claiming for Himself, as He did in the Sermon on the Mount, the final arbitrament of human destiny, but He likewise places Himself where we might have expected Him to place God, or God's law, or God's truth. He does not say, Whoso shall confess God, or, Whoso shall confess God's law, but 'Whoso shall confess ME.'

20. In His reply to the inquiry of John the Baptist, 'Art Thou He that should come?' Jesus said of John, 'This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.' And, 'If ye are willing to receive it, this is Elijah that was to come.' We turn to see what was 'written' of Him whose forerunner Elijah was to be, and we find these words: 'Behold I send My Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall

Acts iv. 21.  
x. 43.  
I. John v. 13

Matt. x.  
32—33.

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Morison.

Confess Me!  
Matt. x. 40.

Matt. xi. 10.

v. 11.  
Also  
Ch. xvii. 12.

Mal. iii.  
1—3.  
The Fore-  
runner in  
prophecy.

suddenly come to His temple, and the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming; and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap; and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver is purged; and they shall offer unto the LORD offerings in righteousness.' And again, 'Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.'

Mal. iv. 5.

Himself the  
LORD.

In identifying John the Baptist with Elijah, Jesus identified Himself with the Lord who was suddenly to come to His temple, whose coming was to be the great and terrible day of the Lord, and of whom it was asked, 'Who may abide the day of His coming; and who shall stand when He appeareth?' The forerunner's words throw light on the words of Malachi—'Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'

Mal. iii. 2.

Matt. iii.  
9-10.

Luke ii. 34.

Isaiah viii.  
14.

Luke ii. 10.

Matt. xiii.  
38.

And to the same effect are the words of Simeon—'Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel'—corresponding with the prediction that the Messiah should be as a rock on which believer's find refuge, but whereon the rebellious are broken. We are accustomed to think of the day of the Lord's coming as a day of joy 'to all people,' and so it was. But it was 'a great and terrible day' likewise. It was the day of a great crisis to the



nation of Israel, a crisis which issued in the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the nation among all the peoples of the earth.

Whatever was said by the prophet respecting 'the Lord,' whose way Elijah was to prepare, must, then, be regarded as appropriated by Christ to Himself, when He spoke of John the Baptist as the Elijah of prophecy and as His own forerunner. The same may be said of the prophecy of Isaiah respecting the voice crying in the wilderness; but as this prophecy is not quoted by Christ Himself, though by the four Evangelists, I only refer to it in passing.

21. Not long after Jesus had spoken of John the Baptist, Matthew writes: 'At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.'

Either these words assert a deep mysterious truth respecting the relation of God and Christ, or they are inconceivably presumptuous, if not inconceivably meaningless. In the prophet it is written—'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this that he understandeth, *and knoweth Me*, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the

Deut. iv. 27.

Isaiah xl.  
3—5.

Ch. xi.  
25—27.  
(Rev. Ver.)  
Also Luke  
x. 21—22.

Mutual  
knowledge  
of Father  
and Son.

Jer. ix.  
23—24.

God known  
of old.

earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.' And from the beginning of the world there have been those who *knew* God, and worshipped and served Him. But Jesus says, 'No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son.' The knowledge of the Son by the Father only, and the knowledge of the Father by the Son only, which Jesus asserts, can be nothing short of an absolute knowledge of the Divine nature as it is in 'Father' and 'Son.' The Son claims not only to have a knowledge of God, higher, fuller, and more intimate than that ever possessed by prophet before Him, but to have a knowledge of Him which is altogether peculiar to Himself, and which is shared by no other. In view of His words, we have to say not only 'who can find out God unto perfection,' but likewise 'who can find out Christ unto perfection?' We are familiar with the idea of the infinite mystery of the Divine nature, but the words of Christ indicate an equal and similar mystery in His own nature. 'No one knoweth the Son but the Father.' 'Here then is a reciprocal relationship of equality: the Son alone has a true knowledge of the Father: the Son is Himself such that the Father alone understands Him.'

Liddon's  
Bampton  
Lectures -  
Lect. v.

Discourses  
on the  
Socinian  
Controversy  
5th Edition,  
p. 529.

'If Jesus was a mere human prophet,' says Dr. Wardlaw, 'this is surely very singular and unaccountable language. The Father and the Son are here represented as having, reciprocally, a full and immediate knowledge of each other, of which *no one else* is possessed. The mode of expression leads us to conceive of the knowledge which the Father has of the Son, as being the same in kind and degree with that which the Son has of the Father; no full and immediate knowledge *of either* being possessed by any other

being. This surely is the most natural import of the words, and is supported by such parallel passages as John i. 18 [the apostle's words]: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"; and John vi. 46 [Christ's own words]: "Not that any one hath seen the Father, save He who is of God, He hath seen Him."'

Jesus seldom called Himself the Son of God, but accepted the title when given by others. But in the instance now before us he calls Himself more significantly, 'The Son,' simply and absolutely; while He speaks of 'The Father' in the same absolute manner. He was, or said He was, *The* Son of *The* Father—terms never used of any other because they could not be in truth.

It is well to note the words, 'All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.' Interpreted by other passages we may paraphrase 'All things' by 'All power,' 'All judgment,' the dispersing of 'pardon,' the giving of life, and in fact all else that pertains to the accomplishment of redemption, according to the Apostle Paul's statement, that it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell. This delivering and giving seem to imply subordination on the part of him who receives. But when we hear one in human form say, 'All things are delivered unto Me of God,' we are constrained to exclaim, as often before, What manner of man is this! And when we hear Him with the same breath assert that He alone knows the Father, and that the Father alone knows Him, the Son, we must interpret His words as excluding the idea of an essential personal inferiority. 'Is it conceivable,' says Dr. J. Pye Smith, 'that a wise and good teacher,

John iii.  
16—17.  
Matt. xxvi.  
63—64.

'The Son.'

All things  
delivered to  
Christ.

Matt. xxviii.  
18.  
John v. 22.  
Matt. ix. 6.  
John xvii. 2.

Col. i. 19.

Scripture  
Testimony,  
Vol. I. 441.

conscious of no dignity above that which was strictly and merely human, or arising only from his office and delegated powers, would select, for the purpose of conveying what might have been expressed in plain words, language which unquestionably describes Himself and the Eternal Being by *equivalent* and *convertible* terms.'

Godet on  
Luke x. 22.

Godet's words may be added: 'That exclusive knowledge which the Father and the Son have of one another is evidently not the *cause* of their paternal and filial relation; on the contrary, it is the *effect* of it. Jesus is not the *Son* because He alone perfectly knows the Father, and is fully known only by Him: but He knows Him and is known by Him in this way only because He is *the Son*. In like manner, God is not *the Father*, because He alone knows the Son, and is known only by Him; but this double knowledge is the effect of the paternal relation which He sustains to the Son.'

Matt. xi.  
23-30.  
'Come unto  
Me.'

22. The words which follow those we have just considered, in the first Gospel, are these: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls: for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.' These words are not so startling as those which precede them. But if we reflect on them they are very startling. It is not that He claims to be a teacher—'learn of Me'—or even that He claims to be a ruler—'Take My yoke upon you'—but that He promises to *give*, and thus asserts the power of *giving*, rest to *all* that labour and are heavy laden. Had He said only, 'Learn of me and ye shall find rest

He *gives*  
rest.

to your souls,' it is only what anyone might say who is conscious of having a message of peace from God to men. But He says, 'I will *give* you rest.' The Gospels tell us how that on one occasion He rebuked the winds and the sea, saying, 'Peace, be still,' and there was a great calm. But there was nothing in the boldness which said to the raging sea, 'Peace, be still,' or in the power which gave effect to the words—as if, one says, 'the storm seemed to turn back in surprise to listen, and the waves fell down as if God had touched them with His hand in passing by'—nothing more wonderful than in the assumption implied in the words, 'I will give you rest.' The weary and heavy laden are to be found everywhere, in every clime, and in every age. Jesus knew it. He saw the evil that is in the world in all its depth and breath. He saw the heart of it and the root of it. He saw it from the centre to the circumference. The world as seen by Him was a world of sinners and of sufferers. And yet He was bold to say—'Come, all ye, unto Me, and I will give you rest.' If ever there was occasion for saying, 'He is beside Himself,' it is now—unless, indeed, He can make good His claim to power over the spirits of men as over their bodies.

Matt. viii.  
27.  
Mark iv. 39.  
Luke viii.  
24.

A great  
calm.

23. During this portion of His Galilean ministry, Jesus wrought a memorable miracle which was followed with important consequences. Having crossed the lake to its eastern shore, a great multitude followed Him, 'because they saw the miracles which He did on them that were diseased.' He had sought retirement, but He denied Himself, and when He saw the people who had flocked to Him, 'He received them, and spake unto them of the Kingdom of God, and healed

Great  
miracle at  
Bethsaida.

John vi. 2.

Luke ix. 11.

them that had need of healing.' 'When the day began to wear away,' the multitude were without food, and without the means of procuring it. And Jesus, by a strange power, such as the Galileans had never witnessed, so multiplied five barley loaves and two small fishes, that not only were five thousand men fed, but the fragments of the feast filled twelve baskets. No wonder that the people thus miraculously fed, said, 'This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world.' Jesus saw their excitement, and perceiving among them a disposition to force Him to become their King, He withdrew Himself into a mountain solitude. And His return to the other side was signalised, not only by a great miracle, but by words of far-reaching significance.

A boat in which He had sent His disciples away was 'In the midst of the sea tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary.' In the fourth watch of the night He went to them, walking on the sea. The disciples were affrighted, and cried out with fear. But Jesus said to them, 'Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.' 'It is I'—that was enough. It gave Peter courage to go down out of the boat, to walk on the water, to go to Jesus. 'It is I'—who? The Nazarene? The carpenter's son? *He* walk on the waves of the sea! Impossible! Those who were in that boat saw in Him, could not fail to see in Him, a great deal more. They may or may not have remembered that it was said of old, that God alone spreadeth out the heavens and treadeth on the waves of the sea. But the wonder which they had witnessed, and His interpretation of it—it is I—was itself sufficient to move them to worship Him, and to say, 'Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.'

The five  
barley  
loaves.

John vi. 15.

Matt. xiv. 24  
Mark iv.  
49—50.

Walking on  
the sea.

Joh. ix. 8.

'It is I.'

Matt. xiv. 33

24. We now come to a great crisis in the public life of Jesus Christ, the first turning of the tide of popular enthusiasm. The occasion of it was the utter and fundamental difference between His idea of the Messiahship and the popular idea—between the spiritual and universal purposes of His mission and the carnal and national expectations of the Jewish people. His own teaching, public and private, and that of His forerunner, were very explicit; and those who had ears to hear should have been in no doubt as to the spiritual character of the Kingdom of God. ‘Think not,’ said John the Baptist, in words which struck at the root of the national pride and of the national hope—‘Think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father: for God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham.’ Whenever, or wheresoever, Jesus spoke of ‘the kingdom,’ it was in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount.

But all did not avail; and the conversation and discourse recorded in the sixth of John so far disillusionised the Galileans, that many who had hitherto followed Him as avowed disciples went back and walked no more with Him.

To ascertain what Jesus taught respecting Himself at this time, we need not determine the exact circumstances in which His words were spoken. Some of them may have been spoken when those from across the lake first met Jesus; some on the way to and when entering the synagogue; and some, as stated, in the synagogue itself. But, according to Edersheim, it would have been consistent with Jewish practice that the greater part should have taken place in the synagogue itself—the Jewish questions and objections

And we must study it carefully.

A great crisis.

Matt. iii.  
9—10.

John vi. 66.

In the  
synagogue  
of Nazareth

representing either an irregular running commentary on His words, or expressions during breaks in, or at the conclusion of, His teaching. It is the substance that concerns us, and there we find the true Christ in contrast with the popular Christ.

Jesus charged the Galileans with seeking Him not because they saw the *signs*, but because they ate the loaves. Instead of seeing, as Lange says, 'in the bread the sign,' they had 'in the sign beheld only the bread.' They saw in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes the beginning of a series of works of the same nature—the inauguration of a new era. But He, the Son of Man, offered to them food of a very different kind—meat that should endure unto everlasting life. Taking up His word 'labour' or 'work,' they ask, What must we do that we may work the works of God? and Jesus answered, This is the work of God, that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent. In saying this He took no new ground. He had often represented Himself as the object of faith—the faith that pleases God and saves man.

This was now the turning point. If they would believe in Him, He must show Himself a true successor of Moses—as they had hoped when they saw His miracle on the other side of the lake—and must give them a sign that He was able to do for them what Moses had done for Israel in the wilderness. Their hearts were still grovelling on the earth. He had offered a higher gift, better 'meat,' than He had bestowed on them the day before. And 'they immediately raised their claims to the level of the fresh promises made them, *only materialising their meaning.*' Their desire when they tried to make Him a King, was that the imposing prodigies which were to

A Leader  
who could  
feed hosts.

Another  
Moses?

Godet in  
*loco.*



inaugurate the reign of the Messiah should at length be manifested. And now it only remained that He should take the rôle of a second Redeemer of Israel, and feed His followers, as He seemed well able to do, even as the first Redeemer had done. Jesus told them that it was not Moses, but God, that had given manna to Israel. And He who gave the manna of old was now giving them bread from Heaven; not perishable, like the manna, but enduring unto everlasting life. 'Evermore give us this bread,' they said; either still utterly misunderstanding Him, or unwilling to see a spiritual meaning in His words. If mistaken, they were soon undeceived. 'I am the Bread of Life,' He said. 'He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and He that believeth in Me shall never thirst.' Moreover, He said, He had 'come down from Heaven,' and repeated what He said to the Judæans in Jerusalem as to His raising up the dead at the last day.

These were extraordinary things to be said of Himself by this Nazarene in the ears of His Galilean neighbours. And nothing could be more natural than that they should 'murmur concerning Him, because He said I am the bread of life, which came down from Heaven.' And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth He now say, I came down from Heaven?' In re-affirming that He had come down from Heaven, Jesus said that He alone had seen the Father, and confounded His hearers still farther by saying, 'The bread which I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the world,' and still farther by saying, 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh

Natural  
that they  
should  
murmur.

John vi 46.

v. 51.

Read v.  
52—58.  
(Rev. Ver.)

My blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'

Eating His  
flesh.

What could He mean? At the least these two things—(1) that He should die, and (2) that through His death believers in Him should have everlasting life. Both these things were utterly alien from the popular conception of the Messiah and His work.

Matt. xvi. 21

Foretelling  
His death  
and resur-  
rection.

Not long after this, Jesus 'began to show unto His disciples'—evidently made a point of impressing upon them—that He must suffer many things of the rulers of Israel, and be put to death by them, and rise again the third day. But His language in the Synagogue of Capernaum was, so far as our record goes, peculiar to that occasion. 'Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you.' His death was to be sacrificial—so we understand Him.

John vi. 51.

And the life, not of the men of Judea only, but 'of the world,' was to come through the spiritual partaking of, that is through faith in, His sacrifice. And in this was fulfilled the ancient oracle quoted by an apostle: 'Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' But this great boon, with reference to which another apostle exclaimed, 'Herein is love,' must be expressed obscurely—revealed, but as 'in a mirror darkly'—in the Synagogue of Capernaum. And we may say that it was the latest truth concerning their Master that His most intimate disciples understood. Some of them had heard John the Baptist say, 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' And if they had understood properly they would have known that the Messiah was to be a Priest as well as

Isa. lxiv. 4.  
1 Cor. ii. 9.

Rev. Ver. of  
1 Cor. xiii.  
12.

Messiah,  
Priest, and  
Sacrifice.  
Is. cx. 4.  
Zech. xiii 7.  
Isa. lili. 8.

a King, that He was to die as well as to reign, and that it was through 'bearing the iniquities' of man He was to 'divide the spoil with the strong.' But all this was hidden from them, to use the language of Scripture. Their eyes were 'holden' that they should not now see what, with later illumination, was the joy of their hearts, and the burden of their ministry to the world.

When Jesus declared not only that He was the Bread of Life which had come down from heaven, but that the Bread was His flesh of which man must eat if they would have life, the last hopes of the men of Capernaum were gone. There was no longer any disposition to take Him by force to make Him a king. He was not the man to follow in the wake of Moses, and deliver them out of the hands of the Roman Pharaoh. His disciples were sifted, as He designed they should be. And to the few who remained, He put the question, Will ye also go away? 'This question,' says Godet, 'far from exhibiting a plaintive tone, breathes only masculine energy. Forsaken by the greater number of His former disciples, it might perhaps have been expected that Jesus would have sought the more earnestly to retain these twelve, the last support of His work. On the contrary, He sets the door wide open. But as He certainly did not desire to urge their departure, and intended only to give them permission, He could not employ the expression *Will you not*, which would have been a positive invitation to depart. Hence, He contented Himself with saying, *You surely will not?* If, however, you will, you may depart.'

The reply of Peter clearly indicates that he too felt the words of Christ to be 'hard sayings.' But the

Isa. liii.  
11-12.

The  
disciples  
sifted.

*In loco.*

Shut up to  
Jesus.

John vi.  
68—69.  
(Rev. Ver.)

The Holy  
One of God.

Mark i. 24.  
Luke iv. 34.

Acts iii. 11.

John vi. 27.

Isa. xlii. i.—  
Behold My  
servant.

attractive power was stronger than the repulsive. And whatever might be the meaning, not now understood, of Christ's 'sayings,' and whatever dark mystery they dimly foreshadowed, 'the Twelve' could not forsake Him; they felt themselves 'shut up' to the following of Him. If they did not understand all, they understood enough to justify their faith in Him, and to constrain them to follow whithersoever He might lead. 'Lord, to whom shall we go'? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that 'Thou art the Holy One of God.' They could not go back to their old past; if He failed them, all hope of eternal life was gone. But they had believed, and were still assured, notwithstanding all difficulties, that He was the Holy One of God.

This form of expression, now preferred by critics of the ancient text and adopted by the Revisers, is found only in this passage of the Gospels, except as used by an unclean spirit in this same synagogue at Capernaum, 'I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.' But Peter himself used it when addressing the Jews after Pentecost—'Ye denied the Holy One and the Just.' It was now in Capernaum a most fitting confession of faith. Jesus had said of Himself, 'Him hath God the Father sealed.' That seal was visible to all who had eyes to see, nowhere more plainly than in Capernaum, in His mighty works, most properly called *signs*. In calling Jesus 'the Holy One of God,' Peter avowed his faith in Him as Divinely sent, and visibly sealed to give life unto the world. His mind, full of Old Testament thought and language, may have been unconsciously influenced by the oracle in Isaiah, 'Behold My servant whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth.' That servant was 'the

Holy One of God,' the object of a faith which survived the hard sayings which sent away from Jesus' following many who would fain have made Him their King, if only He would.

25. Not long after the great crisis in Capernaum, Jesus sought retirement in a remote part of Galilee, near the borders of Tyre and Sidon. But 'He could not be hid,' and there occurred the instructive incident of the application of a Syrophenician woman on behalf of her daughter. And not long after we find Him with his Disciples in the Coasts of Cæsarea-Philippi. The order of the intervening events may be traced without difficulty—the journey from the neighbourhood of Tyre and Sidon to and through Decapolis on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, and the feeding of seven thousand on a mountain in Galilee, and the conflict with Pharisees who demanded a sign.

The region of Cæsarea-Philippi was chiefly a Gentile district. From an immense cavern at the foot of Hermon there issued a river, one of the sources of the Jordan. This cave was an ancient heathen sanctuary of the god Pan, and gave its earliest name of Pancas to the town. 'Jesus' presence there, out of Judæa, in a district covered with tokens of heathen worship, His standing before the cave, His gazing upon those buildings, those niches, those inscriptions, now in ruins and defaced, but then telling, in their freshness, of idolatries still in living power, carries Jesus further away from Judaism, and brings Him into nearer outward contact with Gentile worship than any other position in which we see Him in the Gospel narrative. . . . It is impossible to refrain from cherishing the idea that Jesus had purposely chosen, as in harmony with this

Mark vii.  
24—30.

The Syro-  
phenician  
woman.  
Matt. xvi.  
Mark viii.  
Luke ix.

Mark viii.  
11—12.

Cæsarea-  
Philippi.

Dr. Hanna  
in 'Life of  
Christ.'

epoch of His life, and the purpose He was about to execute, the unique, secluded, romantic district of Caesarea-Philippi.'

Matt. xvi.  
13—20.  
Mark viii.  
27—30.  
Luke ix.  
18—21.

Conjectures  
about Jesus

Somewhere in this region, alone, praying, and His disciples with Him, He asked them, 'Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?' 'It was certainly not for personal reasons, but to call attention to the impression made even on the popular mind, to correct its defects, and to raise the minds of the Apostles to far higher thoughts, that He asked them about the opinions of men respecting Himself.' 'Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.' The people represented in these answers, agreed in that they regarded Him not as an ordinary man or teacher, but as having a mission from Heaven; but at the same time they did not regard Him as the Messiah. There were times when, as in the case of the miracle wrought at Bethsaida, they, the populace, were inclined to hail Him as the Christ; but they were disappointed in not finding in Him the attributes which they regarded as Christly. At the same time they rendered Him no small honour in regarding Him as 'one of the Prophets.' But He was not content with this honour. 'Whom do ye say that I am.' Their spokesman answered without hesitation—'The Christ,' as in Mark; 'The Christ of God,' as in Luke; 'The Christ, the Son of the living God,' as in Matthew. Mark and Luke have condensed the answer into the one word, 'The Christ'—the true idea of 'The Christ,' though not the popular, involving in it the further idea of 'The Son of the Living God.'

At the very beginning of His ministry, Nathanael, as we have seen, confessed his faith in almost similar

terms—‘Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.’ But faith needs enlightenment, and growth, and confirmation. The faith which first gathered disciples around Jesus, when Andrew said to his brother Simon, ‘We have found the Messiah,’ was sorely tried by the unbelief of the rulers of the nation, and by their own disappointed expectations. It was nourished at the same time by the *signs* which Jesus wrought, by the words of eternal life which He spoke, and by the character ‘without blemish or without spot,’ of which they were daily witnesses. It triumphed in Capernaum when the faith of many unspiritual disciples failed: and now at Cæsarea-Philippi, after further trial, and after further opposition to their Master, it found triumphant expression by the lips of Peter. The confession of Peter, and the homage which it implied, were not only accepted by Jesus, but led to the response, ‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven; and I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ Understanding by the rock (the Petra) on which Christ said He would build His church, the confession which Peter (Petros) had made, we do not see in His words any supremacy awarded to Peter. But we see in them these following things: (1) Christ accepts no lower place among men than that of The Christ, the Son of the Living God. (2) The faith and knowledge that He is such comes from a Divine inspiration, even as He had said before, No man knoweth the Son but the Father and he to whom the Father shall reveal Him.

John i. 41.

Faith tried  
and con-  
firmed.Matt. xvi.  
17—19.

‘This rock.’

Peter's  
confession

(3) The building, safe-guarding, and government of the kingdom of God on the earth were claimed by Jesus as His work and prerogative—‘I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ ‘I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ These claims were maintained by this lowly Man in the face of an opposition which became daily more bitter and deadly.

‘Tell no man.’

Keim.

Renan.

Jesus charged His disciples at this time that they should tell no man that He was the Christ—‘a prohibition,’ as Keim says, ‘based both on the prudence that sprang from His certainty, and on a repugnance to popular tumult prompted by carnal motives.’ ‘Galilee,’ Renan says, ‘was an immense furnace wherein the most diverse elements were seething.’ In these circumstances an indiscriminate proclamation of the Messiahship of Jesus might lead to tumult, and would certainly not promote a true faith in Him.

Matt. xvi.  
21–25.  
Mark viii.  
31–38.  
Luke ix.  
22–27.

The Christ  
must suffer.

26. ‘From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.’ The disciples had, through the lips of Peter, avowed the unhesitating conviction at which they had now arrived, that Jesus was indeed ‘The Christ of God.’ And it was fitting that they should now understand what awaited Him, ‘The Christ’ though He was. How unprepared they were for it appears from the way in which they received the announcement. ‘Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee,’ Peter said. The severity of the response of Jesus shows how far His thoughts were from those of His followers: ‘Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art



an offence unto Me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.'

A second time and a third time He told them of His coming death, and it is said that 'they understood not this saying; it was hid from them that they perceived it not; and they feared to ask Him of that saying.' All which seems strange to us. But that the Christ should die was a thought so contrary to all their conceptions of His mission, that they could not accept His words in their obvious literal meaning. And they were so awed by His words, and the solemnity with which He charged them to let His words sink into their ears, that they dared not ask Him what He meant.

As to His coming death, Jesus not only foretold it, but made this extraordinary statement respecting it: 'I lay down My life for the sheep.' . . . Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.' These words are either an expression of insane presumption, or the revelation of conscious Divinity. 'Life is the mysterious thing, the giving and restoring of which the Creator keeps in His own hands. No skill or power of man ever made a new living thing. No skill or power of man ever rekindled the mystic light of life when once gone out. The power lies with man to lay down or take away his own life, but once laid down, what man is he that can take it up again? Yet Jesus speaks as one who has the recovery of His own life as much at His command as the relinquishment of it, speaks of laying it down in order to take it again. He

Matt. xvii.  
Luke ix.  
Matt. xx.

'I lay  
down My  
life.'  
John x.  
13-18.

Our Lord's  
life on  
earth. By  
Dr. Hanna,  
R. T. S. Ed.  
p 314.

Life at His  
own com-  
mand.

would have it to be known, that whatever He might permit the men to do who had already resolved to take His life, His death would not be their doing, but His own; a death undergone spontaneously on His part, of His own free and unconstrained choice. Most willingly, through sheer love and pity, out of the infinite fulness of His Divine compassion, was He to lay down His life for the sheep, that thus they might have life,—and have it more abundantly than they otherwise could have—His death their life—His life from the dead drawing their life up along with it, and linking their eternity with His own.'

We may, or we may not, accept Christ's estimate of Himself and of His power. At present our concern is to show what that estimate was. And the passage just quoted does not exaggerate the meaning of His words—words the like of which no being in human form ever used before or since.

The Tribute  
Money.

Matt. xvii.  
21—27.

27. Before finally leaving Capernaum, a question arose, the answer to which may be called enigmatical, its significance lying below the surface. The collectors of the temple dues went to Peter and asked him, Doth not your master pay the two-drachm piece, or half-shekel, which every male Israelite was expected to contribute to the temple service. Peter at once answered, Yes—either regarding it as a matter of course that his Master would thus obey the law, or because his Master had already done it. On entering the house Jesus anticipated him, saying, 'What thinkest thou, Simon? The kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute? From their sons, or from strangers?' And when he said, 'From strangers,' Jesus said to him, 'Therefore the sons are

free.' Jesus leaves Peter to make the particular application, which is obvious enough, and of deep doctrinal significance. Jesus was a King's Son—He was the Son of the King of Heaven; He was the Son of God. Peter had himself but recently declared it. And hence, since the *didrachms*, or *temple dues*, were an offering, or contribution, or assessment, *paid to God*, the Son of God should not be held liable to contribute. Our Saviour thus claims to be the Prince-Royal of the Universe. The temple was His Father's house on earth. It could not be that His Father would wish Him to be assessed. Such is the Saviour's reasoning. It might be understood but imperfectly at the time. But it could not fail to be remembered and to produce fruit.

Dr. James Morison *in loco*.

28. In enforcing the duty of humility on ambitious disciples who asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Jesus used these characteristic words, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which is lost.' And, in the same chapter, He says, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' A promise, or an assertion, which we shall find again in the end of Matthew's Gospel, and which, to use the words of Dr. James Morison, 'would be eviscerated of all heart and substance if He were not really omnipresent and Divine.'

Matt. xviii.  
1, 10, 11.  
Mark ix.  
33—37.  
Luke ix.  
46—49.

'The face of My Father.'

'I in the midst.'

29. On His last journey to Jerusalem one came and said unto Him, 'Good Master, what good thing shall I

Matt. xix.  
16—22.  
Mark x.  
17—18.

Luke xviii.  
18—19,  
Good  
Master.

do that I may have eternal life ?' And Jesus said to Him, 'Why callest thou Me good ? There is none good but One ; that is God.' The Revised Version of Matthew reads, 'Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good ? One there is who is good : but if thou wouldest enter into life keep the commandments.' But in the parallel passages of Mark and Luke, the Revised Version retains the words 'Why callest thou Me good ? None is good save one, even God.'

Keim.

Keim interprets the words by saying, 'Jesus lacks the perfect goodness of the Divine nature, for He has to struggle against the desires and fears of the flesh, and on that account He repudiates the title *Good*.'

Max Müller  
Biographi-  
cal Essays,  
p. 121.

Mr. Max Müller writes : 'Christ Himself objected to any approach of exaggerated language on the part of His friends and disciples. He knew both the small value of superlative language and the dangers to which it might lead. What would seem to us less liable to the charge of exaggeration than to call Christ *Good Master*. Yet we read in the Gospel of St. Mark (x. 18), that when a rich man came and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ?" Jesus said to him, "Why callest thou Me good ? There is none good but One, that is God." Try to realize to yourself one who could say that, who could turn away reproachfully and sorrowfully from praise that seems to us so simple and moderate as Good Master. What would He have said to the out-pourings of high-sounding, yet often unmeaning, praise that is sung in our churches ?' Can the Professor be ignorant that Jesus Christ did accept homage from His disciples in far more 'superlative language' than 'Good Master,' and that He never once indicated that the homage or the language was

Unmean-  
ing praise !

exaggerated. In studying any ordinary historical question Mr. M. Müller would have searched out and compared one thing with another, and would not have been guilty of the carelessness or superficiality of running away with an isolated expression, and investing it, as in this instance, with a meaning which would make the speaker deny himself. As to the question, What Jesus would say to the outpourings of praise in our churches? We may ask, What does He say to the outpourings of praise in the Heavenly world, of which we read in the Apocalypse? And if the representations of this book be not accepted, what did Jesus say to the outpourings of praise on a memorable occasion in Jerusalem? 'If these should hold their peace the very stones would cry out.'

In interpreting Christ's answer to the young inquirer after the way of Eternal Life, there are two facts which should not be overlooked. (1.) Jesus did not always deny the propriety of calling man good, or claim that it should be exclusively appropriated to God. Even in the great Day of Judgment He will say to many, 'Good and faithful servant.' He used the word familiarly, as others were wont to do; 'A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things.' (2.) Jesus did call Himself Good, and that in a form of mysterious significance. 'I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.' 'I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep and am known of mine; as the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father. And I lay down My life for the sheep.' One can scarcely imagine that Christ used these words, or that His hearers heard them, without a mental reference to a Psalm which was as familiar to

Rev. vii.  
8—11.

Luke xix.  
37—40.

The word  
'Good.'

Matt. xxv.  
21,  
Matt. xii.  
35.

John x.  
11, 14, 15.  
The Good  
Shepherd.

The 23rd  
Psalm.

Isaiah xl.  
11.

Ezekiel  
xxxiv.  
11-16.

vv. 23-24

See also  
Ezekiel  
xxxvii.  
24.

Psalms lxxx.  
1.  
Ezekiel  
xxxiv. 23.

them as it is to us—the twenty-third—‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.’ These other Scriptures were familiar both to Christ and to His hearers: ‘He (the Lord God) shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom.’ ‘Thus saith the Lord God, I, even I, will both search My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out My sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day, &c.’ ‘I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and My servant David a prince among them; I the Lord have spoken it.’

In full view of these Scriptures Jesus says boldly, and without reserve, ‘I am the Good Shepherd,’ as if He combined in Himself the realisation both of the words which described Jehovah as the shepherd of Israel, and of those which promised the coming of a Shepherd who, being a King, bore prophetically the name of Israel’s great King, the Anointed David. We thus reach the conclusion, not only that Jesus did not repudiate the title Good, but that He appropriated it in a form which involved claims which cannot be called less than Divine. In saying to the young man, ‘Why callest thou Me good? One only is good, even God,’ He aimed at correcting the imperfect notion which he had both of Christ and of goodness. The young man thought of Christ only as a teacher, and used the terms good and good thing without any due sense of what they really meant. Christ checked him in his almost meaningless use of a word which was

full of meaning, and reminds him that perfect or absolute goodness belongs to God only. Whether it belonged to Christ Himself, He neither averred nor denied at this time.

30. As another illustration of how Jesus Christ appropriated to Himself Old Testament metaphorical designations of God, reference may be made to His answer to those who asked why His disciples did not fast like those of John the Baptist. 'Can the sons of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.' His forerunner had already designated Him as the Bridegroom: 'Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this, my joy, therefore, is fulfilled. He must increase but I must decrease.'

To understand this, to us, extraordinary figure of speech, we must go back to the Old Testament, where we read: 'Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name';—'It shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband.) . . . And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in judgment.' In the Old Testament idolatry is treated as adultery, the worship of an idol being infidelity to the Divine Husband of the Nation. This figure, 'an elastic one, employed in various forms,'

The Bridegroom.

Mark ii.  
18—20.  
Rev. Ver.  
Matt. ix.  
14—17.  
Luke v.  
33—39.

John iii.  
28—30.

Isaiah liv.  
5.  
Hosea ii.  
16—19.

God the  
Husband  
of His  
Church.

See II Cor.  
xi. 2—3.

is transferred to the New Testament and the relation of Christ to His Church. The Seer in Patmos heard the voice of a great multitude, saying, 'Let us rejoice and be exceedingly glad, and let us give the glory unto Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.' And again, 'Write, Blessed are they which are bidden to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

The point which concerns us is this: That Jesus Christ, in describing Himself as the Bridegroom of the Church, appropriated to Himself, even as in calling Himself the Good Shepherd, a prerogative and a function ascribed to God in the Old Testament. What Jehovah was to the Hebrew Church, Jesus represents Himself as being to the Christian, the Universal Church. A higher claim could not be imagined.

31. At the Feast of Tabernacles there were eager discussions about this Jesus of Nazareth—who He was or might be, and whether He was the very Christ or not. And, in the midst of these discussions, Jesus said, 'Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.' On the last, the great day of the feast, He stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' The Old Testament had said, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.' And on the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles water was carried by the priests in a golden pitcher from the Pool of Siloam to the temple

Rev xix.  
6-7.

v. 9.

See Lev.  
xxiii. 34.  
The Feast  
of Taber-  
nacles.

John vii.  
33-34.

vv. 37-38.

'If any man  
thirst.'

Isaiah lv. 1.



and poured through a silver funnel down to the base of the altar, immediately upon which the 'Great Hallel' (Ps. cxiii. to cxviii.) was sung. On the seventh day, the priests made the circuit of the altar, not only once, but seven times; hence the seventh or last day of the feast was called the day of the Great Hosannah. The 'pouring of the water' was the central part of the service, and during the silence with which it was witnessed, 'There rose so loud as to be heard throughout the temple, the voice of Jesus. He interrupted not the services, for they had for the moment ceased; He interpreted, and He fulfilled them.' It was as when He said in Nazareth, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.'

Edersheim.

The believer in Him should not only be blessed himself, but should be a fountain of blessing to others. The believer refreshed by water from the Rock, Christ, appears transformed into a rock Himself, from out of which, as in the desert, water shall flow to bless others. Such seems to be the meaning of Christ's figurative language. 'He had in chapter ii. (of John's Gospel) represented Himself as the true temple; in chapter iii., as the true brazen serpent; in chapter vi., as the bread of Heaven; in chapter vii., as the true rock; in chapter viii., He will be the true light-giving cloud; and so on till chapter xix., when He will at length realise the type of the Paschal Lamb. It was thus that Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel, made use of each festival to show the old covenant realised in His person, *so entirely did He know and feel Himself to be the essence of all the Theocratic types.*' No wonder that the officers who had been sent to apprehend Him should report, in apology for not fulfilling their task, 'Never man spake like this man.'

The  
believer a  
blessing.Godet *in  
loco.*Old Testa-  
ment types.

John viii.  
12.

The Light  
of the  
World.  
John vii. 15.  
Matt. xiii.

Read the  
whole  
chapter—  
John viii.  
23—24.

vv. 23—29.

v. 53.

Before  
Abraham.

32. On the morning after the Feast of Tabernacles we hear Jesus saying, 'I am the Light of the World: He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' It was a Galilean but recently emerged from a carpenter's shop at Nazareth, of whom His neighbours said that He had never learned letters, that thus called Himself 'the Light of the World.' And all the ages that have passed since He spoke the words, have confirmed and justified the claim.

Many other things Jesus said on this occasion which fill us with wonder. 'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said, therefore, ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.' 'When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as the Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.' 'Your father, Abraham, rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.' The climax of His claims, and of His offences to His enemies, was reached when He said, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' Or, more literally, 'Before Abraham was born, I am.' Critics may discuss what the very words of Jesus in the then vernacular of the Jewish people were. But, whatever they were, we may be sure that the Apostle John understood them and represented them truthfully in the Greek which he has bequeathed to us. And the people who heard them may be accepted as true judges of their meaning, especially as their interpretation of them was not challenged by Jesus, and is not challenged by the Evangelist. We, as we

read the words, revert naturally to the memorable scene at the burning bush, when God said to Moses, 'I am that I am.' And the people in the temple seem to have done the same, for they took up stones to cast at Him as a blasphemer, and He escaped their violence only by hiding Himself.

Exodus iii.  
14.

A Blas-  
phemer!

33. The words, 'I am the Good Shepherd,' have already passed under review, and the words in which Jesus said He had power to lay down His life, and power to take it again. And at this point in our progress it is only necessary to quote them more fully—'I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. . . . I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock, and one Shepherd. Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father.'

The Good  
Shepherd.

John x.  
11, 14—18.

The language of Jesus on this and other occasions, implying at once subordination to the Father and equality with Him, is that of one who consciously occupied the position foreshadowed by the prophet—'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against *the man that is My fellow*, saith the Lord of Hosts.'

Zech. xiii.  
7.

34. The Feast of the Dedication was held two months after the Feast of Tabernacles, in remem-

The Feast  
of the  
Dedication.

brance of the purification of the temple by Judas Maccabæus after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes. Where Jesus abode during this period we cannot say with certainty. But it could not have been in Jerusalem, or in its immediate neighbourhood. There was now no peace or safety for Him there. The hostility of the Pharisees would have accelerated the crisis and brought on the final catastrophe. But this winter feast found Him once more in the midst of His enemies. Walking in Solomon's Porch, the last remains of the old temple, He was surrounded by them, and they demanded of Him, 'How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.' He had now an opportunity, as He had at other times, of undeceiving the people, if He had unconsciously misled them before. But His answer only confirmed and deepened the impression He had produced at the Feast of Tabernacles. 'Never had the position of Jesus, with respect to the Jews, been at such a state of tension. When demanded to say plainly whether He was the Christ, He could not answer, I am; for the meaning which they attached to the word Christ had, so to speak, nothing in common with that in which He used it. Still less could He reply, I am not; for, indeed, He was the Christ promised by God, and, in that sense, He whom they expected. His answer is marvellous for its wisdom. He appeals, as in chapter viii. 25, to those preceding testimonies by which He had applied to Himself all the Messianic symbols of the old covenant, and had in some sort so spelt out His title of Christ, that if they *desired* to believe they had only to pronounce it themselves.'

But far beyond this. Jesus re-asserted the highest

In  
Solomon's  
Porch.

John x. 24.

John viii.  
23-24,  
57-59.

A wise  
answer.

claims in these extraordinary words—‘My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hands. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father’s hand. I and My Father are one.’ Neither prophet nor angel durst speak thus of Himself. Be it that, in some circumstances, ‘I and My Father are one’ might mean no more than unity of will and purpose. But even then a *mere* servant of God, the most devout and godly—and all the more if consciously very devout and godly—would not express the sentiment in a form which *seemed* to exalt Him to a level with God. The utmost He could reverently say would be—‘I am one with the Father—what He wills I will.’ But not only does Jesus say, ‘I and My Father are one’: but He says this after saying, ‘I give unto My sheep eternal life,’ and after saying of Himself what He said of the Father, that no one was able to pluck His sheep out of His hand. The people understood Him now, as they had done at the Feast of Tabernacles, to say that of Himself which implied that He, being a man, made Himself God.

The defence of Jesus has sometimes been interpreted to mean that He claimed the title of God, only in a sense in which that title had been given in an ancient Psalm to the judges of the people. But His hearers in Solomon’s Porch did not so understand Him, for they persevered in their purpose against Him, and sought still to take Him that they might stone Him as a blasphemer.

The argument of Jesus was this:—In the eighty-second Psalm these words are found—‘I said, ye are

John x.  
27—30.  
His high  
claims  
re-asserted.

‘I and My  
Father.’

John x. 33.

The defence  
of Jesus.

Ps. lxxxii. 6.  
(Rev. Ver.)

gods, and all of you sons of the Most High.' The persons thus addressed were judges, who were charged with judging unjustly, and who were told that, exalted as they were, 'they should die like men.' Jesus says of these judges that 'the word of God came to them.' To them on earth a Divine function was given. But He was not as one of them—a man on earth to whom a Divine function was given. He was not of the earth, but the Father, with whom He was, had sanctified, consecrated, Him to the service in which He was now engaged, and sent Him into the world to perform it. Jesus thus distinguished Himself unmistakeably from all others to whom God had given a Divine work to do on earth. He had come forth from God to do the work He was doing. And if to a certain class of merely human representatives of God the Scripture might say without blasphemy, 'Ye are gods,' was He, who occupied a far higher position, guilty of blasphemy because He said, 'I am the Son of God'? And as if to render it impossible for them to suppose that He was taking lower ground than He had taken at the Feast of Tabernacles, He added—'If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.' *Therefore*, as the result of it all, their first impression confirmed, they sought again to take Him.

35. From His retreat beyond Jordan, whither He had gone to escape out of the hands of His enemies, Jesus was recalled by the sickness and death of Lazarus at Bethany. It is no part of my plan to discuss the many theories which Rationalism has invented to get

Ps. lxxxii. 7.

His claim  
not surren-  
dered.

John x.  
37—38.

v. 39.

vv. 10—12.

rid of this miracle of miracles, the restoring of Lazarus to life. These theories are mutually contradictory and destructive. One Rationalist answers another, till no hypothesis is left which is entitled to be called *rational*, but that which accepts the eleventh chapter of the Fourth Gospel as simply and truly historical. Godet concludes his study of the question thus: ‘Spinoza, according to the testimony of Bayle, declared to his friends that if he could have persuaded himself of the raising of Lazarus, he would destroy his whole system, and embrace, without reserve, the common faith of Christians. And this is just what explains the fact of its being at present as violently attacked as that of our Lord Himself. But let the reader take up St. John’s narrative, and read it again without any previously formed opinion, and the conviction to which the Pantheistic philosopher was unable to attain, will spontaneously and irresistibly arise within him, and he will, on the testimony of this account, every particular of which bears the stamp of truth, simply accept the fact with all its consequences, rather than let himself be carried hither and thither by a criticism, each new attempt of which gives the lie to that which precedes it.’

The presumption of Rationalism, aye, and its folly, cannot be better illustrated than by these words of Dr. Abbot: ‘Having before me the doctrine of the synoptic gospels, I am forbidden by mere considerations of style and literary criticism, from believing that Jesus used the exact words, I am the True Vine, I am the Good Shepherd, I am the Light of the World, I am the Resurrection and the Life; but I accept these sayings as Divinely inspired, and as being far deeper and fuller expressions of the spiritual

The raising of Lazarus from the dead.

*In loco.*  
Spinoza.

The Kernel and the Husk,  
p. 183.

Dr.  
Abbot’s  
literary  
sense!

nature of Jesus than any of the inferences which I could draw for myself from the Synoptic Gospels.' If Jesus did not use the words ascribed to Him, the history which says He did is an untrue history; and yet the sayings, invented by some one who had penetrated into the spiritual nature of Christ, are inspired sayings! And this modern critic considers himself justified, by considerations of style and literary criticism, in saying that Christ never uttered them, notwithstanding the solemn and sacred record which says he did!

John xi.  
23—27.

The narrative of the raising of Lazarus from the dead is truly its own witness. 'Jesus saith unto Martha, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world.'

'I am the  
Resurrec-  
tion.'

John vi.  
40—44, &c.

Jesus had already declared that *He* would raise up believers *at the last day*. He had likewise declared that the Son possesses the same life-giving power that is possessed by the Father: 'As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them [causeth them to live]; even so the Son quickeneth [causeth to live] whom He will.' He now condenses these sayings, so to speak, into the one memorable saying, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' He had before now substituted Himself for abstract notions, as when He said, 'I am the Bread of Life.' He now substitutes Himself for the power that raises the dead. And,

John v. 21.



saying, 'I *am* the Resurrection,' He would have Martha to understand that His resurrection power was not such as could be exercised only at the last day, but such as might be exercised when He chose. And this great claim He made good, when, standing by the grave of one who had been dead four days, He cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.'

The words, 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die,' disclose a privilege which cannot be made palpable to the eyes of those who are ever demanding a sign. But it is a great and real privilege notwithstanding. The believer in Christ is not exempted from physical death. But the physical is not the whole of death, nor the worst of death. To die in the full certainty of the future life that is secured for the believer by Christ, is to pass out of a lower life into a higher. Such we understand to be the meaning of the words of Jesus to Martha. And no one was entitled to use them unless He was what Martha called Him, 'The Christ, the Son of God.'

Death, not death.

36. The enemies of Christ were only exasperated by the great miracle wrought by Christ at Bethany, so that He could 'walk no more openly among the Jews.' Withdrawing far away to the obscure bounds of Peræa and Galilee, to a city of which the site is doubtful, he continued with His disciples, teaching, and delivering some of His most beautiful and important parables, until the time drew near, some three months after, when He turned His face once more towards Jerusalem. Six days before the Passover He arrived at Bethany, where He was welcomed by the family which was specially honoured

John xi. 54.

See  
Luke ix. 51.

Luke xviii.  
31.  
John xii. 1.

At Bethany.

John xi. 5.  
John xii. 2.

with His 'love,' and where Mary anointed His feet with ointment that was 'very costly.'

Matt. xxi.  
Mark xi.  
Luke xix.  
John xii.

On the first day of that memorable week, on the last day of which He lay in His grave, He entered Jerusalem after a fashion that was unusual to Him, but which was in harmony with the mingled lowliness and majesty of His life. The Evangelists saw in it the fulfilment of ancient prophecy—'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee; He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass.' And the manner in which Christ accepted the acclaim of the multitude justifies the Evangelist's judgment. On the previous evening many pilgrims had gone from Jerusalem to Bethany to see, not only Jesus, but also Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. The words in which He instructed His disciples where to find, and how to obtain, the ass on which He proposed to ride, imply at once His sovereignty and His humility—'The Lord hath need of him.' 'From the moment that He seats Himself on the colt, He becomes the visible centre of the assemblage, and the scene takes a character more and more extraordinary. It is as if a breathing from above had all at once taken possession of this multitude. The sight of the city and temple which opens up at the moment contributes to this burst of joy and hope. . . . All those hearts recall at this moment the miracles which have distinguished the career of this extraordinary man; they are aware that at the point to which things have come His entry into Jerusalem cannot fail to issue in a decisive revolution, although they form an utterly false idea of that catastrophe.' The procession meets

Rev. Ver. of  
Zeeh. ix. 9.

A Royal  
Procession.

Godet on  
Luke xix.  
37—40.

at every step with new crowds arriving from the city; and these successive meetings call forth ever and again new bursts of joy: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest.' The very children in the temple take up the refrain and cry, 'Hosanna to the Son of David.' The chief priests and Scribes, believing, or feigning to believe, that it was unworthy of Him to accept these honours, said to Him, 'Hearest Thou what these say?' Was it not enough that He should be accounted the Prophet of Nazareth? How could He dare publicly to accept Messianic homage? But He did. Messianic homage was His right—and the children were right. 'Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?' Of the multitude He had said, 'If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.'

Hosanna!

Ps. viii. 2.

The stones  
would cry  
out.  
Luke xix.  
39—40.

Weeping  
over Jeru-  
salem.

Luke xix.  
41—44.

37. In the hour of His triumph, the heart of Jesus was moved with compassion towards a city which, within a few days, under the influence of wicked rulers, would cry, Crucify Him, Crucify Him. 'When He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee in on every side, and lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.' Two days later He spoke of that time of merciful visitation in these

Matt. xxiii.  
37—38.

Ye would  
not.

strange words—‘O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.’

What words are these!—‘How often would I have gathered you under My wings.’ *I; I* would have gathered you—under *My wings*!—as a hen gathereth her brood under *her* wings. Is this the voice of a man? He, a man, gathering the people of Jerusalem together under His protection, and saving them from that fierce bird of prey which was even now hovering over the city to destroy and devour! Are not the words rather the echo and concentration of the words of Jehovah, uttered by prophets in His name, through many generations? ‘I spake unto you,’ God says, by His prophet Jeremiah, ‘rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.’ Five times do we find the familiar and affecting figure—‘rising up early’ to send instruction and warning—in this book. And in the very last page of the history of the nation, before the spoiler came from Babylon, and to explain His coming, we find written: ‘The Lord God of their fathers sent to them His messengers, rising up betimes and

Jer. vii.  
13—15.

The Old  
Testament  
echoed.

11. Chron.  
xxxvi.  
15—16.

sending ; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place ; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord rose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore He brought upon them the king of the Chaldees.' Long before this sad ending of prophetic warning, the Lord said, by His prophet Isaiah, 'O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments ; then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.' This is the spirit in which God dealt with His chosen people from the days of Moses onwards. He had said, by Moses, 'O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever.' And when the kingdom of Israel was hastening to its doom, God is represented as saying, 'O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee ?' 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? How shall I deliver thee, Israel ? How shall I make thee as Admah ? How shall I set thee as Zeboim ?' 'O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.'

See  
II. Chron.  
xxiv.  
17—24.

Isa. xlviii.  
18.

Deut. v. 29.  
xxxii. 20.

Hos. vi. 4.  
xi. 8.  
xiv. 1.

Have we not in these words the tone and spirit of Christ's lamentation over Jerusalem ? Or, putting it otherwise, do we not find in Christ's lamentations the tone and spirit of the prophetic lamentations of long ages that went before ? And does not His 'How often' refer to ministries by His Spirit throughout these ages, rather than, or at least in addition to, His personal ministry ? The very figure which He uses is one which is used in the Old Testament, with various forms of application, to describe the watchful and

Ps. xvii. 8.  
xxxvi. 8.  
xci. 4.  
Also lvii. 1.  
lxi. 4.  
xci. 4.

loving care of God over His people. 'Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.' 'How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings.' 'He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings thou shalt trust.'

Utterance  
of Divine  
compassion

In the light of these Scriptures the words of Christ are intelligible. They are not, what they would be if they were the words of a mere man or of a mere prophet, insane or blasphemous. They are the utterance of a Divine compassion which had striven for the good of Israel from generation to generation. With His usual calm but unobtruded consciousness of what He really was, He could say, without presumption or exaggeration, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together [under My wings], even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not.'

Vol. II. 377.

38. On the day after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, Jesus repeated an act by which He had in the beginning of His ministry claimed authority over the Temple. 'If (says Edersheim) when beginning to do the *business* of His Father, and for the first time publicly presenting Himself with Messianic claim, it was fitting that He should take such authority, and first cleanse the Temple of the nefarious intruders who, under the guise of being God's chief priests, made His house one of traffic, much more was this appropriate now, at the close of His work, when, as King, He had entered His city, and publicly claimed authority. At the first it had been for teaching and warning, now it was in symbolic judgment; what, and as, He then began, that and so He now finished.

Matt. xxi.  
Mark xi.

Second  
cleansing  
of the  
Temple.

Accordingly, as we compare the words, and even some of the acts, of the first cleansing with those accompanying and explaining the second, we find the latter, we shall not say much more severe, but bearing a different character—that of a judicial sentence.’ The Temple cleansed by His authority of the unholy, thievish traffic which a corrupt priesthood carried on, Jesus taught the people who gathered around Him, astonished at His doctrine, saying unto them, ‘Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations? but ye have made it a den of robbers.’ The Temple authorities were silenced for the time, and did not, as on the former occasion, seek to raise the populace against Him. But with bitter hatred in their hearts, they only sought the more eagerly how they might destroy Him.

John ii.  
13—17.

Mark xi.  
17.  
(Rev. Ver.)

39. On the next day, the third of that memorable week, the chief priests and elders asked Him, ‘By what authority doest Thou these things? And who gave Thee this authority?’ A very proper question this—Was His commission Divine or human?—if asked in a proper spirit and with a right intent. But those who asked it were already plotting against His life. ‘The Sanhedrim made sure that Jesus would claim a Divine commission, and hoped to take advantage of this declaration to bring Him to its bar, and to sit in judgment on the question. On the one hand, Jesus avoids this snare; on the other, He avoids declining the universally recognised competency of the Sanhedrim. He replies in such a way as to force His adversaries themselves to declare their incompetence. The question which He lays before them is not a skilful manœuvre; it is dictated by the very

His  
authority—  
What?  
Matt. xxii.  
41—46.  
Mark xii.  
35—37.  
Luke xx. 2,  
41—44.

John’s  
Baptism?

nature of the situation. Was it not through the instrumentality of John the Baptist that Jesus had been divinely accredited to the people? The acknowledgment, therefore, of Jesus' authority depended on the acknowledgment of John's.' The question which Jesus asked them respecting the authority of John's baptism disconcerted the chief priests and elders. 'They, the wise, the skilled, who affect to judge of anything in the Theocracy—they shamefully decline a judgment in face of an event of such capital importance as was the appearing of John! There is a blending of indignation and contempt in the *neither do I* of Jesus.'

But the answer which Jesus will not give to the chief priests, He gives immediately after *to the people*, not in a categorical form, but in parables, which even the priests could not affect to misunderstand, and which were designed to impress both priests and people with the sin and danger they should incur by rejecting Him.

Luke xx. 9.  
Matt. xxi.  
45—46.

The Christ—  
whose Son?

Matt. xxii.  
41—46.  
Mark xii.  
35—37.  
Luke xx.  
41—44.

40. And now, after these parables, and after various attempts by Sadducees and others to entangle Him in His talk, He propounds to the Pharisees a question which struck at the root of the popular misconception respecting the promised Messiah: 'What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?' The popular answer was given at once—quite true so far as it went—'The Son of David.' 'Jesus saith to them, How then doth David in the spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?' To this question there was no answer forthcoming. No



one, we are told, was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.

The question which the chief priests could not answer has a direct bearing on the aim of this work. The object which Jesus had in asking it was not to give His enemies difficulty for difficulty, or entanglement for entanglement. 'He had just announced His death and pointed out the authors of it in the parable of the husbandmen. Now He was not ignorant what the charge would be which they would use against Him. He would be condemned as a blasphemer, and that for having called Himself the Son of God. And as He was not ignorant that before such a tribunal it would be impossible for Him to plead His cause in peace, He demonstrates beforehand, in the presence of the whole people, and by the Old Testament, the divinity of the Messiah, thus sweeping away, from the Old Testament standpoint itself, the accusation of blasphemy which was to form the pretext for His condemnation.'

It is not necessary that I should establish, against rationalistic critics, the Messianic character of the Hundred and tenth Psalm, or that I should expose the attempts of some to find in the question of Christ some other than the natural meaning. The interpretation commonly put upon it is confirmed: (1) By the expressions ascribed to Christ in the Apocalypse, 'I am the root and the offspring of David,' expressions which correspond to those of LORD and SON of David. (2) By Paul's twofold declaration, 'made of the seed of David according to the flesh,' and 'declared to be the Son of God with power,' and (3) by the silence of Jesus at the time of his condemnation—of which

Godet on  
Luke xx.  
41-44.

The 110th  
Psalm  
Messianic.

Rev. xxii.  
16.  
Rom. i.  
3-4.

The Messiah  
must be  
David's  
Lord.

more by and by. The question, 'How doth David in the spirit call Him Lord?' put in the presence of all the people to the conscience of His judges, answered beforehand the accusation of blasphemy raised against Him. Such was the practical end which Jesus had in view, when with this question He closed this decisive passage of arms. The Jews expected only a human Messiah. Jesus would have them to understand that the Messiah foretold by the prophets was to be more than human; and He claimed to be, not such a Messiah as the Jews then expected, but such a Messiah as the prophets foretold, at once David's Son and David's Lord.

The night  
of betrayal.

41. We now come to the events of that night, so critical in the history of Christ and of the world, in which He was betrayed by one of His own followers. He knows His position. The dark future is concealed from Him by no veil. And, except the mysterious agony of Gethsemane, He possesses His soul with a calm which may well be called the calm of God. One would almost suppose while the Cross was, not looming obscurely before Him, as through a mist, but seen clearly in all its shame and pain, that He had no thought of Himself, and was concerned only to comfort and counsel His disciples. To get a due impression of what He was, both in His human lowliness and in His Divine dignity, one must read the whole story as recorded by the Evangelists, and especially by the Apostle John. I cannot transcribe it all in this place.

The Lord's  
Supper.

It was on this memorable night that Jesus instituted the ordinance which we know as 'The Lord's Supper,' and which has been observed from that time until

now 'in remembrance of Him.' In this institution Jesus is self-revealed with a fulness and distinctness which it is scarcely possible to misunderstand. 'This do (He said) in remembrance of Me.' He thus erects a monument to Himself. This did not Moses in the ordinance of the Passover. He and his name had no place in it. To all generations it was to be simply 'the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians.' But Jesus places himself in the forefront of the Christian Passover. Its one purpose was to be to commemorate *Him*. And in this He asserted a position for Himself which no other servant of God, either before or after, has ever claimed.

Exod. xii.  
27.

Its one  
purpose.

Nor is that less remarkable or significant which He ordained to be done in remembrance of Him. Taking bread He said, 'This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.' Taking the cup, He said, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood, even that which is poured out for you.' Or more fully as given by Matthew, 'Drink ye all of it: for this is My blood of the covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.'

Luke xxii.  
20.  
(Rev. Ver.)

xxvi. 29  
(Rev. Ver.)

Jesus thus deliberately chose to have Himself commemorated through all time by symbols of His death. There were many scenes in His life in which He was all glorious, as when, with the crowd around Him, He spake as never man spake; as when He took little children in His arms and blessed them; as when the multitude left His presence restored to health and soundness; as when He stood by the grave and called forth the dead; as when He received an embassy from heaven and was transfigured when He communed

Symbols  
of His  
death.

Many glori-  
ous scenes  
in His life.

Matt. xx. 28.

John x.  
15—17.

with Moses and Elias; or as when He gave command to the winds and the waves and they obeyed Him. The death on the cross, with a known malefactor on either side of Him, was the only event in His history that was not all glorious, but all shameful, as men judged. And yet the monument Jesus Christ erected to His own memory was a symbolic representation of that death. Surely that death was something other than it seemed. He had said before, 'The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life, a ransom for many.' 'I lay down My life for the sheep.' 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again.' Now Jesus was consistent with Himself when He ordained that the 'signs' of His death should be the 'signs' of Himself. He had come to die. His death, compassed by wicked hands as it was, was the very end, according to Himself, for which He had come down from heaven. And being, in His purpose and regard, the chiefest and most glorious event of His earthly history, He chose to be remembered for ever, not as the Mighty Worker, but as the Dying Lamb.

The Chris-  
tianity of  
Christ.

Accepting the Lord's Supper as an index to the mind of Christ, we conclude that Christ Himself is the very heart and centre of Christianity. 'Do this in remembrance of ME.' Eliminate Him from Christianity, and, whatever may remain of moral wisdom and of moral influence, the remnant is not the Faith which He gave to the world. We conclude, likewise, that His death, as He designed it, and as He taught His disciples to regard it, was no mere martyrdom, like that of His followers Stephen and Paul, but the ground on which 'remission of sins' was to be

preached among all nations. This, we repeat, is Christianity according to Christ, and as embodied by Him in the institution which He ordained in remembrance of Himself.

42. In the discourses of that night of the betrayal we find Christ very clearly self-revealed. Let the reader ponder them by himself. A few references must suffice for my purpose.

Two days before Jesus had said, 'One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.' He now says to them, 'Ye call Me Lord and Master; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' Jesus was not capable of any mock humility, or of the affectation of a virtue that was not real. And His condescension is to be measured by the distance between His conscious greatness and His disciples' meanness.

When Judas went out from the Paschal chamber to fulfil his engagement with the High Priests, Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; and straightway He shall glorify Him.' On an earlier day of that week He had said, 'The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified.' And on this night, before going out to His well-known resort in Gethsemane, we find Him praying, 'Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.' 'I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' 'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be

Matt. xxiii.  
8.  
John xiii.  
13-14.

Humility of  
Christ.

John xiii.  
31-32.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John xii. 23.

John xvii. 1  
v. 4-5.

v. 24.

The Son of  
Man  
glorified.

with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me : for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world.' In these words Jesus plainly asserts His pre-existence with the Father in a state of glory before He appeared in this world. No critical ingenuity can invent any other natural or tolerable interpretation of His words. And on no other ground but that which is implied in the assertion of a glorious pre-existence could Jesus, without something like blasphemous presumption, pray, 'Glorify Thou Me.' A man, mere man, calling upon God to glorify him, even as he had glorified God ! This is not after the manner of the Bible servants of the Most High.

John xvii.  
22-23.

Privilege of  
believers.

I do not overlook the words, 'The glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one ; that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them as Thou lovedst Me.' However glorious the privilege of believers in Christ thus prayed for and secured, there is nothing in it to obliterate the distinction between Him and them, as is shown in the very next words—'I *will* that they whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me, that they may behold *My* glory'; and in the last words of this true 'Lord's Prayer'—'O righteous Father, the world know Thee not, but I know Thee ; and these know that Thou didst send Me ; and I made known unto them Thy name, and will make it known ; that the love wherewith Thou lovedst Me may be in them and I in them.'

John xiv.  
1-3.  
(Rev. Ver.)

43. These following words speak for themselves, and need no comment : 'Ye believe in God, believe also in

Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' This was said calmly by one who knew that before twenty-four hours should pass, He should be found in apparent helplessness on what was fitly called the Accursed Tree. Further, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' 'Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me: because I live, ye shall live also.'

Believe in Me.

vv. 9—10.

v. 13.

v. 19.

44. There is nothing more remarkable in the words spoken in the Paschal Chamber, and nothing more presumptuous, one might say insane, if Jesus was only what He seemed, than in the way in which He spoke of His relation to the Holy Spirit of God. 'The Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.' 'When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye shall also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning.' 'It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I

Christ and the Holy Spirit.

John xiv. 26.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John xv. 26.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John xvi. 7

John xvi.  
14-15.

go I will send Him unto you. . . . *He shall glorify Me:* for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.'

Alternatives.

Had the Scribes and Pharisees heard these words they would have exclaimed, Blasphemy! Blasphemy! He maketh Himself equal with God! Away with Him! away with Him! Calling Himself the Son of God did not so obviously imply parity with God, as when He said that He, departing from this earthly scene, would send the Holy Spirit of God to enlighten and regenerate men; and that the Holy Spirit of God would glorify Him. Either Jesus was conscious of a Divinity which entitled Him to speak thus, or was oblivious—and if oblivious, blasphemously oblivious—of that Scripture which He had Himself declared 'could not be broken,' that Scripture in which He found it written, 'I am Jehovah: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another.'

Isa. xlii. 8.

Dependence  
on Christ.

45. The dependence, then and evermore, of believers on *Him* for spiritual life and all its practical fruitfulness, was declared at the same time, in language all the more impressive, because founded on a well-known law of nature—'I am the True Vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it, that it may bear more fruit. . . . Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the Vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in

John xv.  
1-8.  
(Rev. Ver.)



Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for apart from Me ye can do nothing.'

The figure, simple and obvious as it is, which Christ thus uses, reveals in Christ a power which has never been claimed by any other. The disciple is in Christ as the branch is in the vine. In interpreting the analogy we must keep in view an obvious essential difference between the moral and the material. The believer is *in* Christ, not by a physical incorporation, or in any sense that would destroy his personality, but by faith. It is faith that makes him one with Christ, that unites him to Christ, as nature unites the branch to the vine. And by faith he draws from Christ his life and fruitfulness, as by its physical union the branch draws its life and fruitfulness from the stem of the vine.

How is this? Is it because of the superiority of His teaching? Is it because the Sermon on the Mount transcends so vastly every other practical sermon that has ever been preached by prophet or philosopher since the world began? It cannot be. For although Jesus Christ was personally a greater teacher than Isaiah among the prophets, and Paul among the Apostles, yet prophets and Apostles taught not their own wisdom, but as they were inspired by the Spirit of God. The four Gospels cannot be so separated from the prophetic and apostolical writings, that they are to be accepted as the exclusive fountain of life and holiness. And when Jesus said, 'Severed from Me ye can do nothing,' He must have meant something else.

Shall we find the speciality of His meaning in the peculiar, the unapproachable excellence of His own character? Is it in His example that we shall find

The True Vine.

John vi.  
40, 63.

Not by His teaching.

Not by His example

the one only fountain of practical good? Will the study and contemplation of his character enable us to bring forth spiritual fruit? What the purposes of our own will cannot do, what the wisest rules of life cannot do, what the precepts and words of Christ Himself cannot do—is it to be accomplished by the example of Incarnate purity and goodness? Will that example save us from the power of sin? Will it implant in us holy principles? And will it foster these principles into ripe and godly fruit?

Christ did not exhibit His example any more than his precepts, as the fountain of holiness. He described *Himself* as essential to the life and fruitfulness of His disciples, even as the vine, with its roots and stem, is to the life and fruitfulness of its branches. The branch separated from the vine, the disciple separated from Christ, can produce no fruit. They can only wither and die. So He taught. And if we only accept Him and His work on earth as they are set forth in Gospels and Epistles, we shall not find it difficult to explain His words. What we have to do at present is only to remark on the marvel of the prerogative which Christ asserts in this parable of the vine and branches—a prerogative which He asserted consistently ‘in diverse manners.’ It shuts us up to the conclusion that we may search the horizon of history all round; and however much we may find in it that is glorious and beautiful and instructive, there is only One person in the whole range of our vision in whom we can find hope and help for our fallen nature.

46. We go with Jesus from the Paschal Chamber to the Garden of Gethsemane, and are first of all

True ex-  
planation.

Gethse-  
mane.

struck with the contrast. In the one, speaking as on a level with the Throne itself, He says, 'Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory.' In the other He says to His followers, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,' and to His Father, 'O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' The contrast between His former self and His present self, is not more striking than between His present self and the experiences of later martyrs. Stephen's soul was not 'sorrowful' or 'troubled' when his murderers 'gnashed on him with their teeth.' Paul, in the immediate prospect of a martyr's death, declared himself ready to be offered, and triumphed in the assured hope of the crown of righteousness. How shall we explain the darkness that fell on the soul of Jesus in Gethsemane? 'Other men have endured as much physical suffering, have passed through as ignominious and as torturing deaths, without the slightest ruffling of spirit, with the calmest and most heroic fortitude, mingling even ecstatic songs of praise with the sounds of the crackling fagots by which their bodies were consumed. Are we to degrade Christ beneath the common martyr level, or believe that a burden that others bore so easily prostrated Him in the garden, forced from Him those prayers, and wrapped Him in that bloody sweat?'

Far from it. Jesus was still consciously 'The Son of God.' Helpless, and not helpless. To Peter, who drew his sword to rescue him, He said, 'Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?' The strange power which had during His ministry scattered health around Him was still His,

Matt. xxvi.  
38.  
Mark xiv.  
Luke xxii.  
Matt. xxvi.  
39.  
Acts vii.  
54—69.

II. Tim. iv.  
1—8.

Other  
martyrs.

Matt. xxvi.  
53.

Luke xxii.  
51.

for touching the wounded ear of the servant of the high priest, He healed him. His own words uncover the mystery: 'The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?' Had He not said to His disciples, 'The Son of Man is come to give His life a ransom for many'? In instituting the Lord's Supper on that very night, had He not said, 'This is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins?' We have here the key to the agony of Gethsemane and of the Cross. We may not lift the veil, or attempt to lift the veil, from the sufferings of the soul of Him who had encouraged men to regard Him as the Son of God, and who seems never to have had a moment's consciousness of sin. But we can say with Dr. Hanna, 'We feel ourselves shut up to the conclusion that the agony of the Garden was inward, unique, mysterious, impossible to fathom; the same in source, the same in ingredients, the same in design, the same in effect, with our Lord's spiritual sufferings on the Cross; an integral and constituent part of the endurance to which, as our spiritual head and representative, He submitted, and which sprang from our iniquities being laid upon Him, in a way and manner that is not open to us to comprehend.'

We know not how otherwise to interpret the story of Gethsemane. And, thus regarded, we see the claims so boldly asserted throughout His life, not belied, but verified, by His sufferings in the Garden. We shall find these claims solemnly repeated and unwaveringly maintained, to the last.

47. Jesus, led away from Gethsemane by the Roman soldiers, is brought first before Annas, who was regarded by the people as *de jure* high priest, while his

John xviii.  
11.

The  
mystery  
uncovered.

Matt. xxvi.  
23.

His claims  
verified.

Before  
Annas.

son-in-law Caiaphas was high priest *de facto*. When the Sanhedrim assembled Caiaphas presided. The first charges alleged against Jesus were vague and general, and false witnesses were cited to prove them. But the witnesses and their charges broke down. The high priest was not a little disconcerted that Jesus maintained a dignified silence, and left his accusers to confute themselves. A charge, however, must be found—one sufficient to justify His condemnation, and one likely to secure the approval, if not the applause, of the multitude. Hence the procedure of the high priest, who, using the accustomed Jewish formula for administering an oath, said, ‘I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God?’ Matthew and Mark condense or abridge into one what, according to Luke, were two questions—first, ‘Art Thou the Christ?’ And, secondly, in consequence of the answer, ‘Art Thou then the Son of God?’

It must be remembered that the claim that He was the Messiah did not involve the claim that He was the Son of God. The latter was not identical with, but additional to, the former—that is, the Jews of the period, as already stated, did not understand that the Christ whom they expected and longed for was to be more than human. And, however presumptuous it might have been on the part of the Nazarene to call Himself ‘The Christ,’ it would not have been blasphemous. But it was well known that Jesus had often spoken of Himself in terms which greatly transcended the conceptions of the people respecting ‘The Christ.’ The high priest, therefore, asked not only ‘Art Thou the Christ?’ but also ‘Art Thou the Son of God?’

Matt. xxvi.  
62.  
Mark xiv.  
60—61.

‘I adjure  
Thee.’

Not blas-  
phemous to  
say He was  
the Christ.

On His  
oath.

Jesus, put on His oath by the high priest, answered both questions in the affirmative. He *was* the Christ; and He *was* the Son of God. And He added these solemn words, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' The meaning of the high priest's question and of Christ's answers was unmistakable. The Sonship which He claimed was not such a sonship as the Jews around Him claimed when they said, 'We have one Father, even God,' but a special and peculiar Sonship which no mere man could claim. And the high priest so understood it. He rent His clothes, saying, 'He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye?' The entire Sanhedrim accepted the high priest's construction of the words of Jesus, and pronounced Him worthy of death as a blasphemer. Jesus heard the sentence in silence, and thus consented to the interpretation put upon His words, though not, of course, to the charge of blasphemy founded on that interpretation.

John viii. 41

'He hath  
spoken  
blasphemy.'

John xviii.  
30.

A King.  
Luke xxiii.2

John xviii.  
36-38.

48. When Jesus is taken to Pilate for His sanction to the sentence of death, the Jews support their demand by saying simply, 'If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up unto Thee.' And when the Roman governor required a specific charge, the charge made was that He had assumed the functions and authority of 'a king.' The governor inquired into this charge, and Christ confessed Himself a king, but explained that His kingship was spiritual and not such as should interfere with the authority of Caesar. At last, after persistent attempts to induce

Pilate to accede to their wishes, the Jews were compelled to avow the grounds on which they had themselves adjudged Him to be worthy of death—‘We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’ ‘To have to avow this was, doubtless, to them the very deepest vexation and humiliation. For in a moment it changes the complexion and meaning of the whole business. It is at once, on their part, a confession that Jesus is innocent of the crimes they had laid to His charge, and, therefore, that all their charges were false, and all Pilate’s findings right; and that the issues hitherto raised were only for the purpose of deceiving the governor. It was also to avow that, though they had failed in that most wicked design, there was yet more behind—even the heinous offence that He had made Himself the Son of God. Thus Pilate is given to understand what all their excitement, and cabal, and concourse, and heat, are about, that they should prevail on him to execute by crucifixion One whom they had condemned for so great a blasphemy.’

Jesus had explained His Kingship to Pilate, because it was misunderstood or misrepresented. But He would say nothing to explain, or to explain away if that was necessary, the Divine Sonship which He claimed. Here there was no misunderstanding. Caiaphas, it will be remembered, had a clearly understood meaning in the question, ‘Art Thou the Son of God?’ And Jesus answered it in the sense intended by the high priest. The heathen Pilate could not fully understand the force of the new charge now urged against Jesus. But he saw that it had reference to a super-human claim or origin, and asked, ‘Whence art Thou?’

John xix. 7.

The Trial  
of Jesus  
Christ By  
C. F. Chase,  
M.A., p.106.Final  
charge.Pilate’s  
question.

Jesus silent

Inference  
from  
silence.

The form of the question may indicate some timidity, some shrinking from the plain, direct, 'Art Thou the Son of God?' But it can mean nothing less than, 'Art Thou of earth or of heaven, of human or of Divine origin?' Jesus had, however, already sufficiently indicated His heavenly origin in answering the question, 'Art Thou the King of the Jews?' And further answer would have served no purpose. But if Jesus was not conscious of the truth of the claim of a special Divine Sonship, honesty and piety—as we have insisted, and must continue to insist—would have dictated an immediate disclaimer and explanation. But He is silent. 'And in His silence,' to use the words of Meyer, 'it is precisely the self-assurance and greatness of the Son of God which are implied.' The very silence of Jesus in this most solemn hour was in itself an answer to the question, 'Whence art Thou?' For, as Dr. Hanna says, supposing Jesus had been a mere man, had come into this world, even as we all come, would He, had He been sincere and upright, have hesitated to say whence He came? Would He have allowed Pilate to remain in doubt? Would He have suffered him, as his question evidently implied, to cherish the impression that He was something more than human.

*Eccc Homo.*

49. Before we go to Calvary the 'Eccc Homo' of Pilate invites us to 'Behold' and study Jesus as He appears through the scenes of His trial. What manner of man is He? What impression does the whole transaction leave on our minds? Shall we say with the Jews, 'Away with Him,' or with the centurion, 'Truly this man was the Son of God'? Three alternative conclusions are to be kept before us as we proceed

Three  
alternatives



—(a) Imposture, (b) purely human innocence, or (c) the consciousness of a Being and a position altogether unique.

There were two main charges alleged against Him—the one that He made Himself a king, the other that He called Himself the Son of God. The first He answered before Pilate by explaining the Kingship which He claimed. To the second He gave no answer before Pilate, His assertion of His claim to be called the Son of God before the Sanhedrim having only provoked the charge of blasphemy.

In observing His demeanour throughout, it is impossible not to be struck with certain qualities which the world would not spontaneously call manly, but which are manly in the best sense, if not in a super-human degree. He is calm, patient, meek, self-possessed, and dignified, from the beginning to the end of the story. The wrong done to Him is what we should call intolerable, but not a word escapes from Him which suggests any stirrings of anger or resentment in His soul. His meekness does not degenerate into meanness or abjectness; there is no sign of His being cowed into submission by the mighty powers which He finds arrayed against Him. He is conscious of the flagrancy of the injustice which is being done to Him as a man and as a Hebrew, and utters His sense of it in words which must have found an echo in the consciences of His enemies: 'Are ye come out as against a robber, with swords and staves to seize me?' When illegally questioned about His disciples and His teaching, He said, 'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the Synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask

Christ's  
demeanour  
before  
Pilate.

Matt. xxvi.  
55.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John xviii.  
20—21.

them which heard Me what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said.' When Pilate asked Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? He had the courage to demand of His judge an explanation of the question. And when Pilate reminded Him of his power, which he deemed absolute, to crucify Him or to release Him, Jesus assumed the high tone of a Teacher, and told the proud Roman that his power was not his own but given Him of God, and told him this in words which clearly implied that, if he exercised his power in condemning one in whom he found no fault, he would be committing a crime only less criminal than that of those who had placed Him at his bar. Throughout, the meekness of Jesus is the meekness of conscious strength.

There were times when Jesus held His peace. But it was never without reason—reason which even we can trace. He was not silent when the high priest asked 'Art Thou the Son of God?' but he was when the high priest asked, 'Answerest Thou nothing' to the vague charges of false witnesses? Silent to the high priest, he replied to the high priest's servant, because, as one has said, 'the Man had committed the outrage with an erring conscience and in his zeal for a consecrated office.' When Jesus was silent, speech would have been useless, it would neither have convinced His enemies nor saved Himself. And yet we wonder at His silence. We can imagine the seathing indignation with which He might have exposed the hypocritical charges of the Sanhedrim, the baseness of Herod, and even the vacillation of Pilate. And no ordinary man—we might say, no merely human man—could have resisted the opportunity of exposing all these parties before the nation. The silence of Jesus

The accused  
greater  
than His  
judge.

John xviii.  
23.

How He  
might have  
answered.

was the fruit, not merely of consummate wisdom, but of what we might be allowed to call a supernatural self-possession. Well might Pilate marvel. Such calm silence on the part of a man whose innocence was beyond question, but whose life was sought with fanatical eagerness, was unknown in the experience of Roman governors. 'This silence,' as Tholuck has well said, 'is a testimony for Jesus, for it testifies to the repose of His soul; then to His sublimity; and finally to His consciousness of the righteousness of His cause.'

Mark xv. 5.

As to real dignity, we find it, not in the high priest, nor in the Roman procurator, but in the apparently helpless Nazarene at their bar. All but Himself seem in haste, tossed to and fro by sundry passions—the accusers recklessly eager to obtain a conviction and unscrupulous as to the means; the judge at once strong and feeble—strong in his Roman authority, and feeble through his fears of a possible reckoning with himself by others at the bar of a higher Roman authority than his own. Both Jewish elder and Roman judge act in a way that excites mingled indignation, compassion, and contempt. In Jesus alone, the object as He is of the malice of Jew and the scorn of Roman, do we see dignity, a dignity which constrains a higher feeling than mere admiration. His whole bearing is full of 'signs,' not merely that He was an innocent man, but that He was conscious that He had nothing to retract of all that He had taught His disciples to regard Him.

Real  
dignity—  
Where?

50. We have not proceeded far on the way to Calvary when we find evidence of what we may call the identity of Jesus. In the hour of His triumph He

Luke xix.  
41—42,

Luke xxii.  
53,

On the way  
to the cross,

Luke xxiii.  
28 - 30,

Son of Man  
and Son of;  
God,

Confirma-  
tions on the  
cross,

Matt. xxvii.  
39—40,

Matt. xxvii.  
41—43,

had wept over Jerusalem, and said, 'If thou hadst known, even then, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes.' The hour of 'the power of darkness' has come, and, already cruelly scourged and wearing a crown of thorns, He is on His way to the Cross; and, seeing a great company of women whose hearts were moved by His wrongs, He turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?' We hear in these words the very tones of Him who had said, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, but ye would not.' It is the Son of Man and the Son of God that speaks.

51. We shall not dwell on the story of Calvary. But there are points in it which throw light on the claims which all the Jewish world knew that Jesus asserted for Himself. When passers-by reviled Him and said, 'Thou that destroyest the Temple and buildest it in three days. If Thou be the Son of God save Thyself,' they were witnesses that He had said, 'Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.' When the chief priests, mocking Him, with the elders, said—'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

He trusted in God ; let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him ; for He said, I am the Son of God'—they summed up what they would call His pretensions, He professed to be, and was by many believed to be, the King of Israel. He professed to be, and was by many believed to be, the Son of God. This was universally known. 'He saved others,' the chief priests said. They could not deny it. He had gone about doing good, not by such means as were within the reach of all, but by works of which a Sanhedrist had said, 'No man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him.' This His enemies knew full well. The wonder was that, knowing He had saved others, they should doubt whether He could save Himself. When they said, 'If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross,' we can well imagine that it was with some misgiving lest He should come down and confound them, for they knew He had done greater wonders than this. As to believing in Him, if He should come down—no, they would not. Their unbelief was of the heart, not through want of evidence. He afterwards rose from the dead, a greater miracle—if one miracle may be compared with another—than coming down from the cross, and they believed not.

But in this dark hour His words, 'The last shall be first,' were fulfilled. The two malefactors who were crucified with Him were robbers, belonging probably to the band of which Barabbas was the leader, who had made insurrection, and who had committed murder in the insurrection. Most of the insurrections of the period arose out of the deep sentiment of the nation, that it was a double dishonour to be ruled by a foreign and a heathen power. Out of this class

'He saved others.'

John iii. 2.

John xi. 47.

'Come down.'

The two robbers.

The  
zealots.

The  
penitent  
robber.

His faith.

there sprang the bands of men known in Jewish history as 'zealots,' afterwards as 'assassins,' who based their profession on a fanatical hatred to the Roman yoke, but often exercised their terrible profession against all who fell into their hands. To these men, as to all others, not excepting lepers in their isolation, the character and claims of Jesus of Nazareth were well known. They may have often mingled with the crowd that had listened to His words and received the benefits of His loving power. The robber on the cross beside Jesus may have seen many pretenders to high religion, may have seen even pretenders to the kingship of Israel. But he had never witnessed such a spirit as that of Jesus. It was all new to him; as the heaven above the earth, so was it above all that he had ever known or seen. The known professions of Jesus were confirmed by the sublime patience and Divine lovingness of His demeanour on the cross. This it was, no doubt, that begot in the heart of the robber the conviction that Jesus was indeed the Great King whose coming prophets had foretold. 'We thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel,' the disciples said, when their Master was laid in the grave. But the penitent robber had no doubt of it even when their Master was dying—'Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy kingdom.' It does not concern us to determine what He really knew of that kingdom, and what idea he had of Christ's coming in it. But we need not imagine that because he was a robber he was an ignorant man. And it is certain that all that he knew now became truth to his soul. His past life was stripped of all the pretences under which its true character was hidden, and his fellow-sufferer was confessed, even in the insults of His

enemies, to have power to 'save.' And to that fellow-sufferer he turned with confidence.

His confidence was not misplaced. Jesus had said to the high priest, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Now, dying an ignominious death, He speaks after the same manner. But it is very strange—very strange to hear one who is taunted as unable to save Himself from the Cross, saying to a Man dying beside Him, 'This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise'—thus claiming power to carry the spirit of the penitent with Him into the abode of peace and rest.

The cry of Jesus, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' must be explained as we have explained the trouble of His soul in Gethsemane. It must have been the same in source and character, altogether unconnected with bodily endurance or with the pains of dissolution, or with what we understand as the natural fear of death. We must look elsewhere for the cause or occasion of the darkness which fell on His spirit, and we find it in such scriptures as these: 'He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities.' He made 'His soul an offering for sin.' 'He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God'—scriptures which only paraphrase His own language in the Lord's Supper, 'This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.' His cry on the cross is further evidence that Jesus was far other than a mere martyr to truth and righteousness.

Matt. xxvi.  
64.

To-day in  
paradise.

'My God,  
My God.'

Isa. liii

1 Pet. iii. 18.

Not a mere  
martyr.

52. We may not pass by the confession of the centurion, although it bears only indirectly on our

The  
centurion's  
confession.

Luke xxiii. 47.	<p>argument. According to Luke: 'When he saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.' According to Mark: 'When the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this was the Son of God.' According to Matthew: 'When the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.' The variety of statement illustrates the independence of the three historians, and gives, as in many other cases, greater security as to their substantial accuracy. Combining their statements, the impression produced on the mind of the centurion, and of those that were with him, was partly of what they saw in Jesus as they 'watched' Him and heard His words, and partly of the unnatural occurrences of the day. The saying, 'This was a righteous man,' involved in it more than that He was a good or an innocent man, for Jesus had given Himself out to be the Son of God, and if He was a righteous man, He was the Son of God. The likelihood is that both expressions were used—the centurion and his attendants not being so sparing of their words as to utter only one brief sentence. And their imagining Jesus to be the Son of God need not be ascribed to the superstition of their heathen minds. They knew that He had been condemned to die, because He said He was the Son of God. They had heard the chief priests and others mocking Him, and saying, 'If He be the Son of God, let Him come down from the cross.' And they heard Jesus Christ Himself, on the cross, twice calling God His Father. No wonder that what they saw and heard produced in their minds the</p>	
Mark xv. 39.		
Matt. xxvii. 54.		
A Righteous Man.		
If so, the Son of God.		
Luke xxiii. 31-46.		



undoubting conviction that this strange, mysterious man was all that He had alleged Himself to be. They had, probably, seen many crosses, and presided over the execution of many a sentence. But never before had they witnessed such scenes as they witnessed that day. And never before had they witnessed such a spirit on the part of a sufferer, or heard such words, as they saw and heard that day. If they had ever had in charge the crucifixion of 'righteous men'—the victims of tyranny—they felt that the 'righteous man' now dying was of an order altogether different from the noblest of the martyrs of liberty. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'; 'Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,' were words which breathed thoughts and hopes and a heart, which separated the cross of Jesus from all the crosses at which these Roman soldiers had ever exercised their cruel ministry.

The  
crucifiers.

53. That Christ rose from the dead must be assumed, so far as our present argument is concerned. If He really was what He professed to be, the wonder would have been if He had not risen. And we know that the Apostle Paul regarded His resurrection as the determining and crowning evidence, that He was that for which He was condemned for saying that He was. But we have to do now only with the Risen Christ as He appears in the narratives of the Four Gospels.

See 'The Resurrection of Jesus Christ an Historical Fact,' By the Author.

Rom. i. 4.

When Mary Magdalene recognised the voice of her risen Lord, He said to her, 'Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to my God and your God.' All

John xx. 17.

Mary  
Magdalene.

Never 'Our  
Father.'

Emmaus.

Luke xxiv.  
25—27.  
(Rev. Ver.)

The first  
Lord's-day  
Evening.  
Luke xxiv.  
15.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Mark xiv.  
31—50.

this is in the old style on which we have already remarked. He calls His disciples 'brethren,' and He identifies Himself with them as when He says, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me.' But He never says, 'Our Father'—it is always 'My Father' and 'your Father.' He gave them the honour of sonship, but His sonship was not to be confounded with theirs.

In communing with the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, and finding them wonderingly incredulous or doubtful as to the rumour which they had heard of His being seen alive, Jesus said to them, 'O foolish men, and slow of heart, to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. He had forewarned them, with much emphasis, of the cross and the shame and the rising again. And all had come to pass as He had foretold, and it was all in fulfilment of ancient and uniform prophecy. That He was the Messiah promised to the fathers was His claim from the beginning; it was His claim still.

On the evening of the same day, the day of His rising, He repeats this claim on His very first appearing to His disciples collectively, and it is added that He opened their mind that they might understand the Scriptures. The salutation with which He accosted them on this occasion is noteworthy—'Peace be unto you.' They had all of them, after protesting their readiness to die with Him, forsaken Him and fled, when they saw Him a captive in the hands of His enemies. And Peter, the foremost of them, had

done far worse. But now, Christ's words are not of reproach or scorn, but of forgiveness. He had prayed for those who were putting Him to death, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And in the same spirit He says to those friends who, in an hour of very criminal weakness, had belied their own vehement protestations, 'Peace be unto you.'

On the night of the betrayal Jesus said to His disciples, 'I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.' He now tells them that He was risen 'that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem'; and He says, 'As the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you.' The words which represent *sent* and *send* in the original are not the same. 'Strictly speaking,' says Godet, 'there is only one mission from heaven to earth, that of Jesus. He is *the Apostle* (Heb. iii. 1). That of His disciples is embraced in His, and completes its realization. Hence it comes that Jesus, when speaking of Himself, uses the most solemn term, ἀπεσταλκε: His is an *embassy*; while in passing to them He makes use of the simpler term πέμπω: they are *envoys*.'

Before His death He had asserted for Himself the extraordinary prerogative of power to send the Holy Spirit of God. And now, risen, He re-asserts this power by a symbolical action: breathing on them, He said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost': instructing them at the same time not to depart from Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high through the fulfilment of the promise of His Father.

But the most extraordinary self-revelation, or self-acknowledgment, of Jesus Christ, after His resurrec-

Luke xxiv.  
36.  
John xx. 19.

John xv. 16.

Luke xxiv.  
47.

The  
apostles  
sent.

Christ and  
the Spirit.

John xx. 22.  
Luke xxiv.  
49.

'My Lord  
and my  
God.'

John xx. 25.

Christ's  
response.

tion, was His acceptance of the adoring exclamation of Thomas. Thomas was not present when Jesus appeared to His disciples on the evening of the Resurrection Day, and, when told by his fellow disciples that they had seen the Lord, he said, 'Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.' On the evening of what we may now call the second Lord's-day, the disciples were again assembled, and Thomas was with them. During the week, Jesus had had no communication with them. But now He stands suddenly in the midst of them, and said to Thomas, 'Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing.' A more literal translation would be, 'Become, not unbelieving, but believing.' 'The words do not apply to the fact of the resurrection only, but to the general spiritual condition of the Apostle. He was in danger of passing from the state of a believer in Christ to that of an unbeliever. His demand for the evidence of the senses was a step backward, a resting on the less, not on the more, certain. Jesus would have him retrace that step,' and remember the history which led him and his fellow disciples to the faith that He was the Son of God.

John xx. 28.

Godet in  
loco.

Thomas responded, and *said unto Him*, 'My Lord and my God.' This was not an exclamation of surprise. It was his response to the appeal of Jesus. The narrative is very explicit—Thomas *said to Jesus*, 'My Lord and my God.' 'What produces so profound an impression on Thomas is not merely the conviction of the reality of the resurrection, but also the proof of omniscience which the Lord gives him by repeating

the words which he thought he had uttered in His absence. And it is this immediate contact at once with the Divine attribute of omniscience, and with victory over death, which inspires him with the cry of adoration which goes forth from his heart. This scene recalls that of Nathanael. As in the case of that disciple, the light shines at this supreme moment with sudden splendour to the very depths of Thomas's soul; and by one of those reactions frequent in the moral life, he rises at a single bound from the lowest depths of faith to its very pinnacle, and proclaims the divinity of his Master in a more categorical form than had ever passed from the lips of any of his colleagues.'

Jesus did not repress this outburst, as did the angel in the Apocalypse who said to John, 'Worship God.' When Peter fell down at the knees of Jesus, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord,' Jesus accepted the homage of the prostrate man, and said to him, 'Fear not.' So now He says to Thomas, 'Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed. *Thou hast believed*—signifying, not merely, 'thou hast now performed an act of faith in crediting My resurrection,' but 'thou art henceforth a believer, henceforth in possession of complete faith.' The believing of Thomas, approved by Christ, included more than the fact of the resurrection—it included all that was in his saying to Jesus, My Lord and my God. The two convictions of the fact of the resurrection and of the divinity of Jesus were one in the mind of Thomas. The one was involved in the other. And it was this full faith that Jesus hailed. 'Otherwise He could easily have removed the alloy while preserving the pure gold.'

Whence the  
faith of  
Thomas?

'Worship  
God.'  
Rev. xix. 10.  
Luke v. 8.

See the  
Author's  
Handbook  
of Christian  
Evidences,  
pp. 395—7.

‘Blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed,’ said Christ, ‘The contrast which He indicates is between a faith which, to accept the miraculous act, insists on *seeing* it, and a faith which consents to accept it on the foundation of *testimony*. In the first way faith would be possible for the world only on condition of miracles being renewed unceasingly, and appearances of Jesus being repeated to every individual. Such was not to be the course of God’s operation on the earth, and hence Jesus calls those blessed who shall believe by the solitary means of that faith to which Thomas insisted on adding the other.’

John xxi. 15  
Matt. xxvi.  
33.

By the Sea  
of Galilee.

‘Lovest  
thou Me?’

55. The scene by the Sea of Galilee is in harmony with, and a confirmation of, all that went before. ‘Lovest thou Me more than these?’ Jesus said to the disciple who had said, ‘Though all men should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.’ While yet with His disciples He had demanded their love, their supreme love: ‘He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.’ If this requirement stood alone one might fairly ask, Who art Thou that we should love Thee, and even sacrifice to the love of Thee the love which nature and the law of Sinai required that we should render to our father and mother? Such love Jesus did most certainly demand while He was still the Man of Sorrows who had not where to lay His head. No wonder that He should demand it when death itself had yielded to His power.

John x.  
11—16.  
(Rev. Ver.)

On receiving the assurance of Peter’s love He said to him: ‘Feed My sheep—Feed My lambs.’ It was in Peter’s hearing He had said, ‘I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.’

‘Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice ; and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd.’ The future lay before His eye. And all who in the future believed in His name, were claimed by Him as *His* sheep. In instructing believers the Apostles were never to forget this.

Jesus said to Peter at the same time, ‘When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest ; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.’ This spake He, we are told, signifying by what death, a martyr’s death, he should glorify God. And then having prophetically announced his end, He said, ‘Follow Me.’ It was the old voice and the old authority. ‘Whoso doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.’ Come what will, let the dead bury their dead, follow thou Me.

Peter seeing the disciple whom Jesus loved following with them, said, ‘Lord, what shall this man do ?’ This man—what shall become of him ? The motive of the question does not concern us—curiosity or sympathy or aught else ? ‘If [says one] we think of the profound emotion which had just been produced in Peter’s mind by the announcement of his tragical end, nothing will appear simpler than this question.’ The answer of Jesus could not surprise either of the Apostles, if they only remembered the past. Jesus had put His will alongside the will of God. ‘As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.’ ‘Father I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.’ He now speaks of the future des-

‘Feed My sheep.’

John xxi.  
18.

Luke xiv.  
27.  
Christ is Lord.

What of  
this man ?

John v. 21.

John xvii.  
24.

'If I will,'

tinies of His servants on earth as being in His hand and subject to His will, and claims the right to determine for them, without challenge, 'severally as He will.' 'If I will that He tarry till I come, what is that to thee?'

I. John i.  
1-3.

John xx.  
30-31.  
Many other  
signs,

The rumour which went abroad concerning John, that the Master had said that John should not die, may be regarded as an illustration of the uncertainty of unwritten tradition. But in the Gospels we have the written testimony of men who could say, 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.' And the author of the Fourth says, 'Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.'

On a  
mountain  
in Galilee.

All power.  
Matt. xxviii.  
18-20.

56. The Disciples assembled on a mountain in Galilee as Jesus had commanded them; and there are no words of Christ more suggestive of the high position which He claimed for Himself, or of the high position which belonged to Him of right, than those which He spoke to them there—'All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

We may waive for the moment the mystery of the formula—'the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost'—and ponder on the other terms of the commission which Jesus gave to His disciples.



'*Teach all nations.*' We need not inquire how much of the world's geography was known to the Galilean fishermen. Very much of it was unknown to them. And not a little of it is but very partially known to us now. But there was probably no single province of the Roman empire whose people knew so much of the other provinces, and of regions lying beyond, as did the Jews. And, what is of more consequence, the regions known to the Jews included every form of idolatry, every school of philosophy, every degree of civilisation, and every degree of barbarism. Throughout its length and breadth the world was pre-occupied with the corrupt growths of ages, to describe which would be to describe the mythologies which prevailed on the banks of the Indus and the Euphrates, of the Oxus and the Danube, of the Tiber and the Nile, throughout regions rude as Scythia, polished as Greece, mighty as Rome. And it would be to describe conditions of social life so vile that historians pause for very shame before they venture to write the words which distantly suggest the facts. Teach all these nations, Christ said to His disciples: Turn them from the idols which they worship, cleanse them from the pollutions in which they are sunk, and bring them back to God.

And who were they who were charged with this great task? *Go ye*, said Christ. There is not a soldier among them, not an orator, not a scholar, not a Rabbi: probably not one who had ever heard of Soerates or Plato, of Confucius or of Buddha, not one who had ever seen the Tiber or the Euphrates, who had ever travelled beyond Dan in the north, or Beersheba in the south, of their native land. The leaders of them were fishermen who had spent their early life

Teach all nations.

See Acts. ii. 5—11.

The condition of the nations.

'Go ye.'

and young manhood on the Sea of Galilee and its shores. One of them had been a taxgatherer; and we do not know of any of them that they had occupied a higher social position than that of Peter and Andrew, James and John. And it was to eleven such men that Jesus said, 'Go ye, and teach all nations.' Such a task had never been committed to men or angels before; and now it is committed to eleven unlettered Galileans!

Jesus was conscious of its vastness and difficulty. But He was conscious likewise, or professed to be, that it was within His authority to give the charge, and within His capacity to secure its accomplishment. 'All power is given unto Me: go ye, *therefore*, and teach all nations: Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world.' But for these words, and the truth of these words, the commission given by Christ to His disciples could not be redeemed from a charge of the wildest fanaticism.

The whole thing is full of wonders. The least of them is worth noting—that a Jew should contemplate the enlightenment of the world, and its restoration to God, without passing through the gateway of Judaism. 'Teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever *I* have commanded you'—not what Moses hath commanded. The Jews of Christ's time were most narrow and intolerant. They had been separated from the nations by social laws which were designed to save them from the pollutions of the nations. But they mistook the spirit of these laws. And when they thought of the return of the nations to God, even in the reign of the Messiah, it was through Judaism: no admission to God's fold in any other way. Even the disciples of Jesus clung to this notion, long after they

'Go ye,  
*therefore*.'

'Whatsoever I have  
com-  
manded.'

Without  
Judaism.

had heard much to disabuse them of it. But here is a Jew, born and cradled in Judaism, who is absolutely exempt from that which was the intensest and most universal passion of His age and nation. To speak of Him as absolutely Catholic, does not suffice to give us a just impression of the greatness of His victory over the spirit of His people.

But there is a greater wonder still in the fact that one in the position of a Galilean peasant should contemplate the moral subjugation of the world to *Himself*. That He did so we know. Even in the story of the temptation it is shadowed forth. 'The kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, I will give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship Me.' Even if we should consider Satan and the temptation a myth, the words ascribed to the tempter show what it was understood that Jesus contemplated in the very beginning of His ministry. And many of His parables show that nothing less than the world was the object of His ambition. And now, when He is about to be seen no more, the Nazarene who had spent His early life in a carpenter's shop, who had never travelled beyond the borders of a land which was utterly insignificant in extent, speaks of all the world and of all nations with all the calmness of a conscious right to rule over them: 'Teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I command you*.' Again and again the exclamation comes involuntarily from our lips, What manner of man is this? May we not call His ambition divine as well as marvellous—ambition to bring all nations into subjection to Himself, and ambition to claim all 'power in heaven' as well as on earth to effect it? But marvellous as it is, it is as natural as it is supernatural, if we

To Himself.

Matt. iv.  
8--9.

Conscious  
right.

The  
Author's  
Handbook  
of Christian  
Evidences,  
pp.159—160.

believe the Gospel narrative, that He had now risen from the dead and was about to ascend to the glory of heaven.

On Mount  
Olivet.  
Acts i. 5.

Luke xxiv.  
50—51.

Ascension.

Luke i. 1—4  
(Rev. Ver.)

57. We hear the voice of Jesus once more before He finally withdraws from visible communion with His disciples. Met together again in the city of Jerusalem, He said to them, 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.' 'And He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while He blessed them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, blessing God.' Thus concludes the narrative of the Evangelist who began his history by saying that he had traced the course of all things accurately, deriving his information from those who, from the beginning, were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word. And it cannot be denied that the ending is in harmony with the beginning and with the entire course of this mysterious life.

This review of the words of Jesus Christ justifies us in maintaining these two conclusions:—

1. That not one but all the Evangelists record the high claims asserted, explicitly or implicitly, by Jesus Christ—claims on which He is self-revealed to us.

2. That these claims were thus asserted from the beginning of His ministry, and asserted consistently onward to the end.

First, then, *these claims are found in all the Gospels.* In this respect, as in others, we find diversity and unity. For the differences between them we cannot be too thankful. If Jesus was what He professed to be, it was impossible that one portrait of Him should give an adequate representation of His wonderful individuality. The four, written, to use a common phrase, from different standpoints, with different aims, and by different hands, were all necessary.

But their unity in relation to Christ is more marked than their diversity. The exceptions taken to the fourth Gospel vanish before the fact, which our review has made plain, that the very highest prerogatives which were claimed by Christ according to the fourth, were claimed by Him according to the three as well. We have even found instances in which Matthew, Mark, and Luke, record assertions of high claims which are not found in John.

The three record, and John does not, how Jesus said to a paralytic: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee; how He was charged with blasphemy because none could forgive sins but God only; and how He maintained His right as the Son of Man to forgive sins. Matthew alone records the words in which Christ represented Himself to be the final Judge of mankind: 'When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations.' The three record, and John does not, that scene before the High Priest, when Jesus, adjured by the High Priest, declared Himself to be the Christ, the Son of the Blessed, adding, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' Matthew and

Christ's  
highest  
claims  
found in all  
the Gospels.

Matt. xxv.  
31—46.  
See John v.  
22.  
Mark viii.  
38.

Matt. xxvi.  
63—64.  
Mark xiv.  
61—62.  
Luke xxii.  
67—69.

Matt. xi. 27.  
Luke x. 22.

Luke record, and John does not, those mysterious words, 'No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.'

The Second  
Gospel.

The second Gospel is the most *outward* of the four, having less of the thought and teaching of Jesus Christ, in its condensed and rapid narrative, than the others. But its spirit is unmistakable. The subject of the narrative, according to Himself and according to the writer, is the same Son of God that we find in the other Gospels. Mark, as if in haste to unfold the wonderful life of which he was about to speak, rushes *in medias res* without a word of preface, and without reference to birth or childhood, or any other antecedent of the day when Jesus stood before the nation as the long-expected King of Israel: 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in the prophets, Behold I send My messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.' Before we have finished the first chapter we exclaim, What manner of man is this! We feel that here is an absolutely *new* man. And He is conscious of it. He refuses, practically at least, to be numbered with the most illustrious of those who have gone before. He is separated by more than a difference of degree from the patriarchs, prophets, and kings, of His nation. We shall find Him by and by holding in honour Abraham, Moses, Elijah, David, Isaiah, and others. But He stands by Himself. He is greater than the greatest of them; the latchet of His shoes the best and mightiest of them is not worthy to unloose. The story of His baptism, of His temptation in the wilderness, of His first preaching of the Gospel of

Mark i. 1—2

Mark i. 7.

the Kingdom of God, of the call of His first disciples, of the astonishment of His hearers at His doctrine, of the confession of an unclean spirit that He was the Holy One of God, of the healing of a multitude of diseased folk, of His retiring into a solitary place to pray, of the cure of the leper, who said, 'If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean'—all this is told in that first chapter. There is no *literary* effort to magnify the facts recorded, or to excite our wonder, or to invest Jesus with glory. But the impression produced is not the less but the greater. It is not produced by the narrator but by the narrative. And it is this—that the keynote struck by the writer in his opening sentence—'The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'—is fully justified. The Jesus of this chapter is indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

No magnifying of facts.

Note may be taken, without comment, of the very emphatic way in which Mark, notwithstanding his brevity, records words in which we cannot fail to hear the echo of a Divine consciousness—as when he tells us how Jesus said to His disciples, who could not heal a demoniac, 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you?' This is not the style of a prophet, but of Him who said: 'Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.'

Mark ix. 19.

Ps. xciv. 10.  
Also lxxxvi.  
13—14.

So throughout Mark the 'I' and 'ME' of Jesus are of constant occurrence. 'Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a mighty work in My name, and be able quickly to speak evil of *Me*.' 'Suffer the little children to come unto *Me*, and forbid them not.' 'Take heed lest any man deceive you: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am the Christ; and shall

Mark ix. 39.  
(Rev. Ver.)

x. 14—16.

xiii. 5—6.

Mark xiii.  
13.  
xiii. 31.

xiv. 6-7.

deceive many.' 'Ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake.' 'Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away.' 'Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on *Me*. For ye have the poor always with you; and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but *Me* ye have not always.'

The Third  
Gospel.

Luke v. 8.

Isa. vi.

Luke iv. 16.

xxiv. 26.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Some in the  
three; not  
in the  
Fourth.

On the  
Person of  
Christ,  
p. 256.

The impression produced by the Third Gospel is quite as strong and unmistakeable as that produced by the First and Second. In addition to all that the three have in common, it is Luke alone that records how that Peter fell down at Jesus' knees and said, in the spirit of Isaiah when he beheld the glory of Jehovah, 'Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord'; and how that Jesus, instead of rebuking him, said, in the spirit, and as with the authority, of the reply of Jehovah to Isaiah, 'Fear not: for from henceforth thou shalt catch men.' It is Luke alone that records the scene in the Synagogue at Nazareth, when, reading a prophecy of Isaiah, He said, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.' It is Luke alone that records the words of Jesus to the disciples at Emmaus—'Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory'—telling us at the same time that 'Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.'

There are thus, as we see, many intimations of the high claims of Jesus in the three Gospels that are not in the fourth. But enough has been said to show that the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is equally the Christ of the three. The student, says Doctor Pope, 'must imprint upon his mind by study, very careful study,



the fact that with all their abundant variations of statement, there is but One Form evidently set forth throughout the Scriptures. A casual glance may observe differences between the Three and The One of the four Gospels; between these four and the Acts; between St. Paul's and St. Peter's, and St. James's Person of Christ; between St. Paul's in the Romans and St. Paul's in the Colossians. But an intent scrutiny shows that they are all 'gathered up into one' by a wonderful *ἀνακεφαλαιώσεις*. If we retreat to a little distance and look, there is but one outline, the Figure of Him whom, if our eyes be not holden, we know to be the Son of God incarnate.

It would require a volume to show how innumerable internal indications converge on the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel was written by the disciple whom Jesus loved. It was written long years after the other three, not to contradict, but to supplement, especially in the face of errors which had begun to spring up in connection with quasi-philosophic speculations. 'Matthew had demonstrated the *Messianic* function of Jesus; Mark had described His *activity* as an Evangelist in Israel; Luke had presented His *work* as Saviour in respect to the world. But behind His function, His activity, His work, there was His *person* itself. Here is the background of all the peculiar mysteries of that life; and of that central mystery should Jesus never have said anything to His own friends? Should He not have made them understand of *what nature* that Being was who here below fulfilled this threefold commission of Messiah, Celestial Evangelist, and Saviour of Man? Assuredly, when

See Luthardt, Godet, Westcott, Sanday, Lias, and, more briefly, 'The Age and Authorship of the Gospels,' by the Author of this work.

Godet on John, Vol. I. 5-6.

once the Church was established, and the work of the first Gospel teaching accomplished, all that part of the personal teaching of Christ which this task had not immediately absorbed, could not fail to come to light, by the mouth and by the pen of one of His own followers, of one of the most intimate amongst His friends.'

'Further,' says Godet, from whom I quote, 'the sublime idea of the person of the Saviour, which forms the salient feature of the Fourth Gospel, does not belong exclusively to that writing. It is implied in the first three Gospels. Nay, more; it lies at the foundation of the feeling of the whole primitive Church. It is with the gesture of adoration that the whole Apostolic Church, Jewish and heathen, regarded its Head.'

Asserted  
from the  
beginning.

John i. 49.

Luke v. 10.

Matt. xvi.  
17.

The *second* conclusion which, we have said, our review justifies, is that *the claims asserted or sanctioned by Christ were asserted or sanctioned from the very beginning of His ministry and onward consistently to the end.* There is no obscurity about the facts of the case. At the very beginning we find Nathanael calling Him the Son of God, the King of Israel. And He commends the faith thus avowed. When finally, calling the fishermen of Galilee to leave their nets and become His immediate personal followers, He accepts the homage which the prostrate Peter offers Him. At Caesarea-Philippi He ascribes the confession of Peter to the special teaching of the Divine Father. And throughout, amid friends and foes, He never varies, and at last He allows Himself to be put to death on the charge that He made Himself the Son of God.

It is true that Jesus avoided, carefully as it would appear, proclaiming Himself to be the Messiah before the people, and that He sometimes checked the zeal of those who would so proclaim Him; because He knew the political meaning and the political hopes which were attached to the term, and the least misunderstanding of His claim might lead to tumult, and thus be fatal to His work. He rather preferred to indicate His Messianic claims and functions in forms which were sufficient to awaken reflection and to satisfy reflection and to satisfy the reflective, without using the term itself.

It is true likewise that Jesus taught His disciples even as they were able to receive the teaching. This we know on His own authority. At the very end of His ministry we find Him saying to them, 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth.' And at an earlier period we find it written, 'With many such parables spake He the word unto them, as they were able to bear it.' The wisdom of such a mode of teaching in ordinary circumstances will be universally acknowledged. In the circumstances of Jesus of Nazareth it was especially necessary. Supposing it to be true that He had existed from eternity, as implied in His words, 'Before Abraham was, I am,' and that such eternal pre-existence implied His Godhead, could anything be more unwise, or more unlikely to produce conviction, than that He should rush into the midst of the crowd in the Temple, or on the Galilean mountain, and exclaim, 'I am the Eternal God, fall down and worship Me'? The first and most natural impression would be that He was insane. He was in the

Danger of political excitement.

The disciples taught as able to bear.

John xvi. 12-13.

Mark iv. 33.

form of man, He was a man, without anything to distinguish Him visibly from His fellows. And to awaken and justify the conviction that He was something more and higher, He must live a life, and teach truths, and work works, which would compel men to ask, What manner of man is this? and which would justify any words of His which, spoken from time to time, pointed to a heavenly origin and a Divine personality. This is what He did, and the result of it appears in the faith of His disciples.

Inquiry  
excited.

John i.  
42-45.

John i. 49.

John ii. 11.

Faith  
streng-  
thened.

John v.  
66-69.

John xiv.  
8-9.

From this it may be inferred that while His followers believed from the beginning of His ministry that He was the Messiah, and even called Him the Son of God, they did not from the first, as already suggested, understand the full meaning of those terms as they did at the end of His ministry, and especially as they did when they were illumined by the promised Spirit of Truth. The history records progress in the faith of the disciples. When Jesus 'manifested forth His glory' by His miracle at Cana in Galilee, we are told that 'His disciples believed in Him.' They had already believed and avowed their faith. But now their faith was strengthened and confirmed. It is as if they said, 'Of a truth this is He! On the testimony of John the Baptist we have followed Him as the Christ, the Son of God. It is now certain that the Baptist spoke the truth.' Their faith was sometimes tried by His 'hard sayings,' but even then they could say, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Holy One of God.' One of His disciples said to Him, only one or two days before the end, 'Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.' To which Jesus replied, 'Have I been so long

time with you, and hast thou not known Me, Philip ? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' And, on the same day, when Jesus had spoken to them of having come forth from the Father and of returning to the Father, His disciples said to Him, 'Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, and speakest no proverb or parable. Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou comest forth from God.' They were desirous to ask Him the meaning of what He had been saying to them. And 'by answering directly the thoughts that were secretly agitating their hearts, Jesus gave them a standard whereby to estimate the truth of all His sayings, and the certainty of all His promises.' 'At hearing Christ's simple and exact recapitulation of all the mysteries of His existence, past, present, and future, the disciples felt surrounded by unexpected light—a unanimous and spontaneous confession was pronounced by them, and the doubts which had from the beginning of these conversations tormented them were dispersed.' Their faith reached its climax when Thomas said to Jesus, 'My Lord, and my God.'

John xvi.  
27—30.

John xvi.19

But the increase of the faith of the disciples and of their knowledge of the meaning of all that was involved in the terms in which they expressed their faith, does not imply any such increase on the part of Christ Himself. When, at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus said to the Jews, 'If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins,' they said to Him, 'Who art Thou?' and He replied, 'Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning'—(Revised Version: 'Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning'). From the beginning He

Christ knew  
from the  
beginning.

John viii.  
24 - 25.

knew Himself, and knew the work which the Father had given Him to do.

To many readers this will appear a truism—so self-evident that it is an impiety to question it. But yet it needs to be affirmed. How Jesus of Nazareth came to regard Himself as the Messiah, and how He persevered in the faith of Himself, is a favourite matter of speculation with many. The most reverent and appreciative of Rationalists writes thus: ‘Even as John visibly derived his mission, not from external signs, but by dint of determination from the depths of his soul, so Jesus won and conquered His Messiahship, not by a sealed diploma, but through sharp inward conflict, and the converse of His spirit with all the signs of the times: doubtless through a wrestling of the spirit, so much the loftier, as it meant more to be not only the pioneer of the Messiah, but the Messiah Himself.’ It is admitted that ‘a divine beckoning and a divine sway must have accompanied the greatest deed and the greatest crisis in the history of mankind.’ But still it was ‘out of inward conflict it [faith in His Messiahship] flowered forth.’ It was ‘a signless, immaterial fact grasped by pure spiritual intuition,’ and might be ‘subjected to vacillations of the striving, doubting, human spirit,’ and ‘was actually so subjected in every great crisis of His life.’ We should make a great mistake, we are further told, ‘if we assumed a self-consciousness superior to all fluctuations, perpetually self-consistent and immovable as a rock in the torrent of earthly influences.’

‘Out of His own mouth,’ we may reply to these statements. ‘Nothing is plainer,’ Keim says, ‘than that Jesus gave expression to the greatest confessions concerning Himself just at the very time when He

Keim's  
Jesus of  
Nazara,  
Vol. II 298.

Vol. IV 45.

Vol. IV. 47.

Keim in  
reply to  
Keim.

was compassed by contradiction, and that He did this as a direct reply to that contradiction. In answer to the question of John, He confessed Himself to be the One who had come, and the One pointed to by all prophecy; in the face of the indifference of the wise. He confessed Himself to be the Revealer of God; He met the attack of the Pharisees by declaring Himself to be greater than the Temple and David and the pioneer of the kingdom of heaven; and when the people proved unfaithful, He claimed to be superior to Solomon and Jonah—to be the highest and last of the prophets.' Again, 'The great confessions in the Galilean storm-period are not explained by regarding Him merely as an adventurous calculator between success and non-success, as a hot-headed man who met contradiction by contradiction. His claims were much too definite, much too confidently made, to be the mere results of the vicissitudes of external facts; much too lofty to have been suggested by the most brilliant earthly surroundings; much too profound not to have been the product of quite a different world, not to have been derived from a calm, comprehensive, observant, meditative, introspective study of the enigmas and revelations of the spiritual world.'

These last quotations confirm and justify our position that the claims asserted by Christ were asserted from the beginning of His ministry and onward consistently to the end, and that the increase of the disciples' faith in Him does not imply any increase in His own faith in Himself. There was no 'fluctuation' in His consciousness that He was the Messiah. That consciousness did not spring out of the 'intuitions' of the soul of the Nazarene Carpenter; it was not pro-

Vol. IV.  
48—49.

Christ's  
claims  
definite.

No  
fluctuation.

duced by 'the study of the enigmas and revelations of the spiritual world.' Instead of its being true that He did not obtain His Messiahship 'by a sealed diploma' from heaven, He spoke of Himself as Him whom God the Father had sealed. And instead of His mission being 'signless' like that of John the Baptist, His very enemies remarked on the difference between John and Jesus in this respect. Again and again, Jesus insisted that He had come from above, and had come to do His Father's will. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews only reflects the spirit in which Christ always spoke of Himself, when, writing of priesthood, he says, 'No man taketh the honour unto himself, but when he is called of God, even as was Aaron. So Christ also glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that spake unto Him, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.'

John vi. 27.

John x. 41.  
xi. 47.Heb. v. 4—5  
(Rev. Ver.)From  
childhood.

Luke ii.  
40—52.  
'The Rev.  
Ver. omits  
'in spirit,'  
and says in  
margin,  
'becoming  
full of  
wisdom.'

The growth of Jesus from childhood to manhood—the development of His mind and character, it might be called—is mentioned historically by the Evangelist Luke: 'The child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him.' Again, 'Jesus increased [R. V., advanced] in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' As to the great purpose of His appearing on earth, it is certain that His words when He was only twelve years old, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' involved a meaning which separated Him, as known to Himself, from all other servants of the Most High God. And there is no historic reference to any growth or growing clearness in His consciousness of His unique personality and of His great mission. From the hour of His public 'appearing unto Israel' until He ascended from Mount Olivet,



He never wavered in His claims as the 'sent' of God and the 'Son' of God.

We stand in doubt of all attempts to draw aside the veil from the consciousness of the God-man. Even believers in His supernatural Person sometimes adventure into a style on this subject, which only befits those who explain away the true supernatural. Thus one writes what might be mistaken for a quotation from Keim, and what, in fact, is an echo of Keim's words: 'The conflict of Jesus with the Jews was fruitful of the most opposite results. While without Him it created an atmosphere of doubt, suspicion, and estrangement, *within Him it marked the rise of a clearer and more certain consciousness of His nature and mission.*' The fact is that the conflict of Jesus with the Jews, instead of awakening within Him a clearer consciousness of His own nature, was the result of His avowals of His nature and mission. The opposition of the Jews did not lead Him in any way to understand that He was the Son of God: but His avowal, direct or indirect, that He was the Son of God, was the cause of the opposition of the Jews. When Nathanael called Him the Son of God and the King of Israel, He could not have been, in any sense, or to any extent, 'unconscious of His nature and mission.' Nor can we imagine that it was then for the first time, or at His baptism, when the voice from Heaven proclaimed Him the Son of God, that He attained to a full consciousness of Himself. The difficulty is in supposing that He was ever unconscious of Himself. 'Lo, I come to do Thy will,' are the words which prophecy put into His lips. And that will which He knew from the beginning it was His to do, included, according to the Epistle to the

Let the veil remain.

Unwise theorising.

At His baptism.

Hebrews, 'the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.' We admit the mystery of the growth in knowledge of the child Jesus, and the mystery of the union of the Divine and human in His one Person, with all the questions that arise out of it, and which speculative theology has endeavoured to answer. But we think it wiser, and more rational, to bow before the mystery with silent awe than to attempt to explain things that are too dark and too deep for us. This, at the same time, we repeat, that there was no want of clearness or certainty in the mind of Jesus, respecting His nature or mission, from the beginning of His conscious human existence. And the only grounds for imagining that there was, is, that toward the end of His ministry He spoke more clearly of Himself and of His work than He did at the beginning. But in this He only exercised the discretion of a wise teacher, and adapted His instructions to the great and testing occasion which was approaching.

No uncertainty in Christ's mind.

PART SECOND.

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THE TITLES ASSUMED OR  
SANCTIONED BY JESUS CHRIST.



## THE TITLES ASSUMED OR SANCTIONED BY JESUS CHRIST.

THESE titles were three—the Son of Man, the Son of God, and the Messiah, or the Christ. And although much concerning them has been necessarily anticipated in our review, we must study them separately and more fully.

### I.—THE SON OF MAN.

This is the title by which Jesus chose most commonly to designate Himself. It occurs twenty-two times in the Gospel by Matthew, and, besides the parallel passages in the other Gospels, five times in Mark, twelve times in Luke, and eleven times in John—between seventy and eighty times in all, counting the repetitions in parallel passages. In all these cases it is used by Christ and applied to Himself alone. It does not occur in the Gospels in the mouth of any other, nor is it found in all the Epistles. In the Acts it occurs once—used by Stephen in the hour of his martyrdom—‘Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God.’

Acts vii, 56.

The use of this designation by Christ so often, and by Christ alone, is very significant and suggestive. Many questions have been asked as to its origin and its meaning.

Origin of  
title.

Dan. vii.  
13.

Sponta-  
neous.

But ful-  
filling  
prophecy.

Luke iv. 21.

Isaiah lxi.  
1-2.

Dan. vii.  
13-14.  
See vv. 9 &  
10.

J. Pye  
Smith's  
Scripture  
testimony,  
Vol. I. 278.  
Quoted by  
Dr. J. Pye  
Smith.

1. As to its origin, the question has been discussed whether it was spontaneous and self-originated, or borrowed, or at least derived, from the prophecy of Daniel? The question is irrelevant. The two suppositions, fairly put, are not opposites, but mutually explanatory. That it was spontaneous, in the sense that He was conscious of its rightfulness, conscious that He was what He called Himself, is evident from the frequency and constancy of His use of the term, and cannot be doubted by any who believe in His sincerity and honour. At the same time He must have been conscious that in this, as in other things, He was fulfilling, or was the fulfilment of, ancient prophecy. In Nazareth He said, with reference to a prophecy of Isaiah, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.' Had the occasion occurred, He might have said the same in effect with reference to the prophetic vision of Daniel.

Part of that vision reads thus: 'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man, and He came even unto the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' The Rabbinical commentators, without exception, appear to have acknowledged the Messianic reference of this vision. Frederick Rosenmüller says: 'The Jewish interpreters are unanimous in the opinion that the *Son of Man*, the person in human form, borne upon the clouds of heaven, is the Messiah. It is a description of the kingdom of the Messiah: and in the same terms

as those which represent the kingdom of God in chapter vi. 26.' It is scarcely possible that when Jesus said to the Sanhedrim, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,' He could be unconscious that He was the subject of the vision of Daniel; or scarcely possible that the Jewish doctors who heard Him should not have mentally recalled a vision with which they were familiar. And if it was in any wise present to their minds, it would confirm their impression that Jesus, in using the words of the vision, meant to claim at the very least an affinity with God which, in their estimate of it, amounted to blasphemy.

It does not follow from this that Jesus 'borrowed' the title, Son of Man, from Daniel. An event is not the consequence of a prophecy; the prophecy rather is the consequence, though not in time, yet causatively, of the event. An event does not occur because it was foretold; it was foretold because it was to occur. Jesus Christ *was* 'the Son of Man,' all that that title implies; and what it implies His own various use of it will show. And what He was to be was foreshown in many prophecies, this vision of Daniel among the rest. Jesus connected Himself with that vision when He called Himself the Son of Man.

Though Jewish interpreters found the Messiah in the vision of Daniel, it does not follow that the term, the Son of Man, had come to be a popular synonym of 'Messiah,' and therefore it might be used without provoking either a premature popular hostility, or anything like a political movement. Dr. Pye-Smith says with great truth: 'Though in its original connexion it is combined with lofty characters of majesty and honour, the expression in itself is such that nothing

Matt. xxvi.  
64.

The title  
not  
borrowed.

Not a  
synonym  
of Messiah.

Scripture  
testimony,  
Vol. I. 465.

Wisdom in  
choice of  
this title.

can be conceived more simple and unassuming. It was, therefore, admirably calculated to answer the purposes of our Lord's habitual testimony concerning Himself, during that period in which His wisdom saw it right to suspend the universal declaration of His claim to be the Messiah. It could hurt no feelings, rouse no prejudices, offend no pride. It could minister no fuel to the rage of the violent, nor furnish any occasion to the captiousness of the artful, nor be wrested into a pretext for exciting civil discord, nor awaken the jealous fears of the Roman government. But while thus humble and inoffensive, it was intelligible, clear, and definite, to those who "searched the Scriptures"; and it went the full length of a claim to the Messiahship.'

Signifi-  
cance of  
the title.

2. The *significance* of the title is involved in part, but only in part, in what has been said of its origin.

A true  
man.

(a.) Whatever else it means or implies, it means or implies that He who bore it was a *man*, a true and real man. To most readers this needs no proof, unless it be necessary to prove that He ever existed. But it was not so always, and even now it is needful that the fact should be understood and insisted on. Before the last apostle was taken from the Church, there were professed adherents of Christianity who denied the proper humanity of Christ, and denied it for the sake of His divinity. One of the most widely spread and deeply rooted theories of the age, philosophical and religious, was that matter is an essentially malignant thing, the source of all evil. It was therefore impossible, those thought who held this theory, or who could not free themselves from its influence, that God

Docetics.

Matter  
malignant.



should assume a real material body. His body could not be real flesh and blood; it could only be an apparent or a phantom body. It is in view of this notion we understand the words of the Apostle John: 'Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.' 'The words,' Dr. Westcott says, 'evidently refer to external circumstances vividly present to St. John's mind. They point, as it appears, to the great outbreak of the Gentile pseudo-Christianity which is vaguely known as Gnosticism, the endeavour to separate the "ideas" of the faith from the facts of the historic Redemption.' Long before the writing of John, the Apostle Paul found it necessary to warn the churches against other developments or fruits of the principle that matter is evil. The material universe, it was thought, could not be the creation of Him who is absolutely good and infinite. Hence between Him and the creation there must be found a series of emanations or æons—and Jesus Christ was one of these. 'No'—said the Apostle, 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

At a later period there appeared a theory, the very opposite of the ancient Gnostic or Docetic theory. Whereas the earlier denied a true body to Jesus Christ, the latter denied Him a true human soul. The Godhead was to and in Jesus Christ what the soul is to or in man; it was to Him instead of a human soul; and so Jesus was denied the possession of a human rational nature. This view of Christ's person appears again and again in the history of Christian speculation. It is the 'pilot-idea,' to use the author's own phrase, of a 'Life of Jesus the Christ,' by Henry Ward Beecher.

I. John iv. 2.

Com. *in loco*.

See Dr. Lightfoot on Colossians—pp. 73—81.

Col. ii. 9.

On the theory of Appollinaris, see Bruce's Humiliation of Christ, pp. 39—46.

Henry Ward Beecher, p. 41, &amp;c.

Henry Ward  
Beecher,  
p. 53.

p. 52.

No essen-  
tial differ-  
ence  
between  
Divine  
and  
human?

Denial of  
proper  
humanity.

The Fourth  
Gospel on  
Christ's  
humanity?

John i. 14.

‘God was very God,’ Mr. Beecher says. ‘Yet when clothed with a human body, and made subject through that body to physical laws, He was then a man, of the same moral faculties as man, of the same mental nature, subject to precisely the same trials and temptations, only without the weakness of sin.’ And this doctrine is defended on the ground that ‘a human soul is not something other and different from the Divine soul,’ and that ‘one of the grand results of the Incarnation is the *identification* of the Divine and the human nature.’

Of the theory that the only difference between the Divine and the human nature is one of degree, not of kind, more may have to be said. Meantime, our contention is that, according to Christ Himself, as self-revealed in the chosen designation of ‘Son of Man,’ He was a true and real man, possessed of every faculty and attribute that belongs to the essence of our nature. Deny this, and you are involved in consequences which undermine the faith as effectually as if you denied His Divinity. Deny this, and the whole story of His acts, His conflicts, His sorrows, His sufferings, His tears, becomes a fable, or the story of an illusion—an imposition practised on the world by God Himself. His life can be no longer an example; His death no longer a sacrifice.

It is a significant fact that the Gospel which gives the greatest prominence to the superhuman aspect of His person, is the Gospel which makes the most explicit assertion of His humanity, and gives some, at least, of the most striking illustrations of His humanity—‘The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.’ The whole after-life of this Eternal Word made flesh, as recorded by

John, is the life of a true and real man. The sympathy and the tears of the story of the raising of Lazarus, are the sympathy and tears of a man. The sufferings, mental and physical, of Gethsemane, Calvary, and the cross, are the sufferings of a man. More than all, almost, I might say, His praying is the praying of a man. There is nothing more human in the life of Jesus Christ than His praying. 'Prayer,' it has well been said, 'differences man from the creatures below and from the creatures above: it is the symbol of the fact that, on the one hand, he is infinitely higher than all other mundane works of God; and that he has been made, on the other, a little lower than the angels.' So that the prayers of Jesus Christ are a proof of His possessing a true human nature. If Christ truly prayed, He was truly man. The weakness of infancy, and His growth in wisdom and stature, do not more clearly certify His humanity than do the prayers of His riper years.

Christ  
praying.

(b) If Jesus Christ was a *man*, in the true and proper sense, what manner of man was He *morally*, as self-revealed in word and deed? In answer to this question, appeal may be made to many who do not believe in Christ as Divine or as a Saviour. For example, Strauss, in his first attempt to reduce Christ from the Divine to the merely human, said: 'Where shall we find in such beauty, as we find it in Jesus, that mirroring purity of soul which the fury of the storm may agitate but cannot cloud? Where has there been so grand an idea, so restless an activity, so exalted a sacrifice for it, as in Jesus? Who has been the founder of a work which has endowed with as rich treasures, in as high a degree, the masses of

If man,  
what man-  
ner of man  
morally?

Strauss on  
Christ's  
character.

men and nations through the long ages, as the work which bears the name of Christ? As little as mankind can be without religion, so little can they be without Christ. And this Christ, as inseparable from the supremest shaping of religion, is historical, not mythical: He is an individual, not a mere symbol.'

Christ  
according  
to another  
Rationalist.

In the same spirit, the anti-supernatural author of 'Supernatural Religion' says: 'The teaching of Jesus carried morality to the sublimest point attained, or attainable, by humanity. The influence of His religion has been rendered doubly great by the unparalleled purity and elevation of His own character. Surpassing in His sublime simplicity and earnestness the moral grandeur of Chakya-Mouni, and putting to the blush the sometimes sullied, though generally admirable, teaching of Socrates and Plato and the whole round of Greek philosophers, He presented the rare spectacle of a life, so far as we can estimate it, uniformly noble and consistent with His own lofty principles, so that the "imitation of Christ" has become almost the final word in the preaching of His religion, and must continue to be one of the most powerful elements of its permanence.' John Stuart Mill says: 'It is Christ, rather than God, whom Christianity has held up to believers as the pattern of perfection for humanity.'

Testimonies such as these might be greatly multiplied, and many of them have been often quoted—such as those of Rousseau, Renan, Theodore Parker, and others.

Excellen-  
cies of  
good men.

But let us look at Christ for ourselves. The excellencies of good men put forth their strength often, or ordinarily, in one direction, and are condensed, so to speak, in one grace or virtue; as if the life or vital

energy of a tree were to flow into one branch, giving it much strength and beauty, but leaving other branches in a state of comparative feebleness. Thus we speak of the faith of Abraham, the meekness of Moses, the patience of Job, the boldness of Elijah. Not that these graces stood alone; for all true excellence springs from one root, and where this root exists it will produce many branches and many fruits of true goodness. Still human nature in the best of men, ordinarily, puts forth its greatest strength in some one or two directions. The character of Jesus Christ stands out in marked contrast to this partial and incomplete development of the good in man. It is not the presence of one or two great qualities that commands our reverence: it is the extraordinary combination of excellencies which it displays that constitutes its peculiar attraction—'meekness and majesty, firmness and gentleness, zeal and prudence, composure and warmth, patience and sensibility, submission and dignity, sublime sanctity and tender sympathy, piety that rose to the loftiest devotion, and benevolence that could stoop to the meanest sufferer, intense abhorrence of sin, and profound compassion for the sinner—these mingle their varied rays in the tissue of His character, and produce a combination of virtues such as the world never saw besides, and such as the most sanguine enthusiasm never ventured to anticipate.'

There is another marked difference between the goodness of Christ and that of others. The best of men often fail even in the matter of their characteristic excellencies, as we find in the case of Abraham, Moses, Job, and Elijah. But Jesus Christ never. We may say of Him boldly, that with the united characteristic excellencies of all the saints combined in His

'Work and Conflict,'  
by the  
Author,  
p. 31.

Completeness of  
Christ's  
character.

Dr. W. L.  
Alexander  
in 'Christ  
and Christianity,'  
p. 131.

Christ  
never  
failed.

one person, and attaining thence their highest and brightest forms, there is not to be discovered a moment's faltering, a moment's suspense, a moment's failure. To use Bible language, the Prince of this world came and found nothing in Him—He was a perfect man.

Thus far we shall have the concurrence of many who will not accept the confession of faith of either Peter or Thomas. But studying the moral self-revelation of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, we are bound to go farther. An Apostle says of Him that He was 'without blemish and without spot,' that 'He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.' And the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that 'He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,' and describes Him as 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' It is evident that the New Testament writers regarded Jesus Christ, not only as a man of singular and unparalleled excellence, not only as *perfect* in the sense in which some Old Testament saints are described as perfect, but as absolutely sinless, sinless in a sense in which no other mortal man has ever been. And we have to inquire whether this impression of Him is justified by His own self-consciousness.

The first thing that strikes us is the entire absence of all acknowledgment of defect or unworthiness. We know how John teaches that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and how Paul represents the flesh as lusting against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and represents a man—whether regenerate or unregenerate does not matter for our argument—as saying: 'I find a law, that, when I would do good evil is present with me; for I delight in the law of God

Was He  
sinless?

I. Peter i.  
19; ii. 22.

iv. 15.

vii. 26.

No confes-  
sion of  
defect.  
I. Ep. i. 8.

Gal. v. 17.

Rom. vii.  
18-25.

after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.' But we find no trace of any such experience or consciousness in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, we find Him saying, 'The Father hath not let me alone; for I do always those things that please Him.' The things pleasing to God, as Godet says, designate the will of the Father, not from the point of view afforded by the letter of any code, but in its most spiritual and inward property. 'This saying shows that not only was Jesus conscious of never having committed the slightest positive sin, but also of never having omitted the smallest good, either in thought or deed.'

No conflict with sin.

John viii. 29.

The connection in which Jesus used the words is profoundly significant. In a form which compels us to feel that we are standing in the presence of a great mystery, He contrasted Himself with his Jewish brethren and neighbours thus—'Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are from this world; I am not of this world.' More than this, He intimated in words which we can understand better than did His hearers, that on Him, the Son, without sin, lay the hope of the deliverance of others from the bondage of their sinfulness. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. And the servant abideth not *in* the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.'

Contrast between Himself and others.

John viii. 34-36.

On the same occasion Jesus said—'If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I came forth and am come from God. Ye are of your father the devil. But because I say the truth, ye believe not. Which of you convinceth Me of sin? If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?' 'The *perfect* holiness of Christ

vv. 42-43.

Go let *in loco*.

is in this passage demonstrated, not by the silence of the Jews, who might have chosen to ignore the sins of the questioner, but by the assurance with which His direct consciousness of the purity of His whole life is in this question affirmed. Had He been merely a super-eminentely holy man, with a conscience as tender as such a degree of sanctity implies, He would not have suffered the smallest sin, whether in His life or heart, to pass unperceived; and what hypocrisy it would in this case have been to put to others a question whose favourable solution would have rested only on their ignorance of facts which He Himself knew to be real.'

Never  
repenting.

We get an insight into the moral self-consciousness of Jesus in another way. He called on others to repent, but we see no sign or trace of repentance in Himself. He said, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,' but He, the King, though a man, was consciously not a man that needed a second birth. Even Strauss could not conceal from himself the fact that the nature of Christ, 'unlike that of a Paul, an Augustine, or a Luther, which was purified by means of a struggle and a violent rupture, and retained the scars of it ever after,' was uninterruptedly and harmoniously unfolded, and that 'His inner development took place without violent crisis.' Jesus represented a publican as saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner,' and commended his spirit rather than that of the Pharisee; but we do not find that He Himself ever said, 'God be merciful to Me a sinner.' He taught His disciples to pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses,' but He never offered this prayer for Himself. There is one long prayer of His on record—in the seventeenth chapter of John's Gospel—but there

Unlike  
Paul and  
Augustine.

Never said  
'Be merci-  
ful to Me.'



is not a breath of contrition in it from beginning to end ; not a sigh of conscious shortcoming or imperfection ; but, on the contrary—‘ I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.’ Within a few hours after, we find him in Gethsemane praying to the Father with strong crying and tears, but all His agony fails to wring from Him one word of confession of sin. The mystery of the trouble of His soul in that terrible hour, is not relieved or explained by the slightest indication of conscious demerit. ‘ We feel that in this one life remorse has no place ; and this fact is so much the more remarkable and decisive, in proportion as Jesus was more humble than other men, and His conscience more sensitive than theirs. The more advanced we are in the life of holiness, the more painfully do we feel the stains of sin. If the slightest defilement had existed in Him, He would have been more affected by it than we are by the gravest faults into which we fall.’

No one who understands human nature will venture to say that in all this we have only an affectation of sinlessness. Anything more difficult, morally more impossible, for a sinful man, or for a consciously imperfect man, than to sustain the character of a sinless man, cannot be imagined. For a sinner to profess himself to be without sin, and so to act his part through life as never to be found out, or to betray himself, may well be called an impossibility. The old providential law would soon find a new application. ‘ Be sure your sin will find you out.’ Bushnell says well—‘ If Jesus was a sinner, He was conscious of sin, as all sinners are, and therefore a hypocrite in the whole fabric of His character ; realizing so much

Godet.

See the Author's ‘ Handbook of Christian Evidences ’ —chapter on ‘ The Gospel Portraiture of Christ.’

On 'Nature and the Super-natural'—chapter x. Also Pre-bendary Row's 'Jesus of the Evangelists'—chapter iv.

Sinlessness and progress.

See the Author's 'Work and Conflict'—pp. 2-12.

Our true progress.

divine beauty in it; maintaining the show of so much unfaltering harmony and celestial grace; and doing all this with a mind confused and fouled by the affectations acted for true virtues.' Such an example of successful hypocrisy would be in itself the greatest miracle [at least the strangest] ever heard of in the world.'

There is no real incompatibility between sinlessness and progress. Entire and sinless purity may be but the basis of endless progress. Adam was without spot as he came from the hands of God; but had he continued holy for one hundred years, and all these years actively served his Maker, and resisted every temptation to sin, his holiness would have become brighter and stronger. The saints are without spot when they enter heaven, but their holiness grows, as well as their knowledge, amid the services and studies of the heavenly world. Entire purity does not then necessarily exclude progress. But whatever moral progress may be predicted of the man Jesus, especially during the youth which preceded His ministry, or even during, and in consequence of, the temptation and trials of His public life, it must be distinguished in an essential respect from that of other men. His progress was an onward and upward growth from a sinless root, perfect and pure at every stage, never needing correction or change, uninterrupted, unmarred, for one moment or in one instance, by inward disease or outward injury. There was not an hour in His life in which He could not say what He said at its close, 'The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me.' *Our* true progress begins with a radical change of the original bent and bias of the soul; and every subsequent attainment costs an effort

and a struggle, advancement being perpetually checked by inward weakness or outward temptation, and all the attainments actually made exhibiting signs of weakness or defect.

That men like Strauss, whose *eulogia* on Christ are almost worshipful, should, notwithstanding, deny the sinlessness of Jesus, is a necessity of their principles. Strauss assumes that to believe in miracles is absurd. And, the impossibility of miracles assumed, he argues, logically enough, the impossibility of such a phenomenon as a sinless man. And in his opinion, consequently, to say that Jesus was a person whose like cannot be again expected, is just as much the affirmation of a miracle as is that of the resurrection of a dead man. But the fact remains, that once, and only once, in the world's history, there appeared one who, tried by the loftiest standards given of God or imagined by man—and His own is confessedly the loftiest—was Himself unconscious of any moral shortcoming, and has been regarded ever since as absolutely true to His own high conception of duty to God and man.

Sinlessness  
miraculous.

(c) The title, *the Son of Man*, seems to imply that Jesus Christ was not merely *a* man, a common man, but *the* only true man, *the* only man of all the ages since man existed on the earth, in whom the true idea of our humanity has been fully and perfectly realised. The ideal man, the model man, and all such expressions, but imperfectly indicate the fact that in the living person and character of Jesus of Nazareth, alone, have we the highest moral possibilities of our nature attained in a real living man. This implies that He was, as we have seen that He was, without sin. Sin, though universal in actual mankind, is no

The only  
true man.

Sin a deformity.

part of our ideal nature. It does not belong to the essence of humanity. On the contrary, it is a disease, a deformity, a deterioration—in short, a fall. From the hour when sin first found a place in man until this hour, there has lived no man in whom sin has had no place, but the man Jesus. He, as a man, was the perfect image of God. This is not only true in itself, but it is a truth which we find in His self-consciousness that He was ‘separated from sinners.’

The Representative Man.

I. Cor. xv. 21—22.

vv. 45—47. (Rev. Ver.)

ch. v.

The Pauline doctrine.

(*d*) There is another idea in the title—the Son of Man—whether or not clearly disclosed in the records which we have of His self-consciousness—this, that He was the Representative of mankind. The Apostle Paul says, ‘Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.’ ‘The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.’ ‘The first man is of the earth earthy, the second man is of heaven.’ He teaches the same doctrine in the Epistle to the Romans. The limits of my argument, however, do not allow me to appeal to the Apostle in the matter. And our question is whether this idea may be found in the recorded self-consciousness of Jesus. Is it not involved in the very title which we are considering? Does not the constant use of that title convey the idea that He was conscious of standing, as a man, in a relation to the race in which no other man ever stood? His hearers might not apprehend this. But there was much in His teaching which they did not apprehend. And the Pauline doctrine is supported by the fact that the very blessing which Paul ascribes to Christ as ‘the last Adam,’ or ‘the second man,’ Christ did

personally claim to bestow on man. Paul says the last Adam was a life-giving spirit. Christ said, 'I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.' Paul says that our resurrection is involved in Christ's. Christ said, 'I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though He die, yet shall he live.' The Pauline doctrine, then, in its substance at least, was no novelty. And Christ's own words justify us in finding in His chosen title a declaration of His representative character. What this representative character may involve *theologically*, or in relation to the entire system of Christian doctrine, is a question outside the scope of the present theme.

Anticipated  
by Christ's  
words.

(e) In conclusion, this One Son of Man is represented by Himself and others as occupying positions, and doing things, which, to say the least, are very extraordinary, and apparently incompatible with His rank and character *as a man*. 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost.' 'The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.' 'The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.' 'The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath.' 'As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.' 'Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.' 'When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations.' 'Hereafter

Doing what  
no man  
could do.

shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.'

The first of the sayings just quoted—'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost'—is enough to show that He who called Himself the Son of Man was conscious that He was more. A man, exalt Him as you will, saving a lost race, the race of which He is Himself but a member, albeit the purest! One wonders that such an idea should be entertained by any reader of the Gospels. But it has been. 'What the world needed,' says Dr. Abbott, 'was some man who should concentrate into himself, for the help of men, all those beneficent forces by which nature is bent on regenerating mankind, so that his life might be the natural life of all. He was to do for us the work of the family by giving us a new and higher consciousness of sin, a new ideal of the Fatherhood, and a new ideal of the faith and love of little children. He was to do the work of society . . . He was to do the work of nature. . . . Lastly, he was to do the work of death by dying that he might triumph over death, living for ever in the hearts of his mourning friends, and afterwards in the hearts of generation after generation of those who, though they had not seen him, would none the less be drawn within the scope of his spirit. But if you ask me *how* was the new redeemer to do all this, I should reply, by being a consummate man, as far superior to ordinary man as truth is superior to even the very best of Illusions.'

It is not worth our while to take the trouble of analysing these statements to show how ambiguous and inconsequential they are. Enough to remark on their conclusion. The world was waiting for four

Man no  
Saviour.

'Through  
Nature to  
'Christ,'  
p. 202.

thousand years for a 'Consummate Man' to be its 'Redeemer.' And this consummate man was found at last in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He 'concentrated into Himself all those beneficent forces by which nature is bent on regenerating mankind.' We search history and we search the Gospels, to discover what those forces are, and we cannot find them. We sit at the feet of Jesus and we do not hear Him say anything of forces which He has derived from nature, but very much of Himself as above nature, as having come from above, and of His bringing life to men from God Himself. A consummate man is but a man after all, a 'complete' man, a 'perfect' man. And mankind needed more than the 'help' which such a man could bring it—whose help could only be that of instruction and example. To call such a man a Redeemer, and the 'help' he brings the world a 'Redemption,' is to misuse very sacred and Scriptural language, and to mislead 'simple souls.' The world has derived much 'help' from the quickening words and quickening example of many of its great men. But it has had, and it has, only one Redeemer. And the Redeemer it needs He could not be if He was nothing more than a consummate Man.

The words we have quoted, and many others like them, in which Jesus speaks of the Son of Man as exercising functions, performing works, and receiving honours, which are incompatible with His rank and character as a *man*, are not, it must be remembered, to be found in isolated texts which might be cut out of the Gospels and still leave the history complete and self-consistent. Such representations pervade the Gospels, and are of their very essence. Can we find any key to the interpretation of them? Can we frame

A consum-  
mate man,  
not a  
Redeemer.

Find a key.

a hypothesis that will explain, not explain away, but really explain these things?

Not in His  
human  
superiority.

The hypothesis that the Son of Man was only a singularly wise and pure Rabbi, self-developed, self-educated, or educated by the force of His own great soul, by the stars over His head, and the flowers around His path in His Galilean home, is palpably inadequate. It cannot account either for what He was or what He said of Himself. Nor will it suffice if we add to it the idea of prophetic inspiration, such as was possessed by Isaiah and others. Such inspiration, granted in a higher degree than ever before, might make Him as much wiser than Solomon as Solomon was wiser than any man of his age; and as much sublimer than Isaiah as Isaiah was sublimer than all the prophetic poets of the ancient world. But at the best it could only raise Him by some degrees above His fellows. There is nothing in the completest inspiration that can account for His unique position as 'the Son of Man,' for His sinless character, and for the authority and glory which He claimed as the Son of Man. We must find some other hypothesis, or leave the problem unsolved.

Not in His  
inspiration.

Not in His  
human  
Lordship.

Gen. i. 26.

v. 28.

Nor is the solution of it to be found in the lordship originally assigned to man, which the Epistle to the Hebrews represents as realised in Jesus Christ. In the history of the creation of man we are told that God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion . . .' And to our first parents He said, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over . . .' Man was thus constituted lord of the earthly creation. The Psalmist, with an evidently conscious reference to the words in Genesis,



said, 'When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hand; Thou hast put all things under his feet.' There is no sign of any Messianic reference in the mind of David. His thought was of the condescension of God to man, although man was great in relation to this lower world over which God gave him dominion. 'But the complete meaning of God's words can be learnt only when they are fulfilled in history. To Him who speaks in Scripture the material dominion was the symbol of a higher and universal rule, to be fulfilled in the Son of Man when the fulness of time should come. The Psalm is not directly Messianic, it relates to man; but it is through the Man Christ Jesus, that it receives its complete fulfilment for mankind.' This is what the Epistle to the Hebrews teaches. 'Now we see not yet all things subjected to him (man). But we behold Him, who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.' There is one in whom the Divine purpose is fulfilled in all its parts. And redeemed men are joint heirs with Christ.

But there is no confounding of Christ and man, no reducing of Christ to mere manhood, even in its loftiest possible condition, in the mind of the writer of the Epistle, any more than there was in the mind and teaching of Christ Himself. For before his assertion of the humanity of Christ, and the glory to which

Psalm viii.  
3-6.

Dr. Moulton  
in Bishop  
Ellicott's  
Commen-  
tary on  
Epistle to  
Hebrews.

Heb. ii.  
8-10.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Rom. viii.  
17.

Heb. ii.

Heb. i.

The true  
key.

A title of  
dignity or  
humilia-  
tion?

humanity is exalted in the person of Christ, he had in the most explicit terms asserted the proper Godhead of Christ as the Son of God: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.' All this is in keeping with the words of Christ Himself.

From our exposition of the significance of the title, 'The Son of Man,' it will be seen that we have no need to raise the question which has been discussed, whether it was a title of dignity or of humiliation, 'whether the feeling of His greatness or that of His abasement be regarded' as determining the choice of Jesus. If our interpretation of it is correct, it involved both. To be *a* son of man was on His part a humiliation; but to be *the* son of man was a high distinction. The title asserted on the part of Jesus His participation in human nature; but, if He was only a man, to assert that He was a man were to assert a palpable truism. Did not those who heard Him see with their own eyes that He was a man? What need could there be to tell them that He was? Did there not then underlie the assertion of His humanity, an antithesis to a higher than human sonship, even His Divine sonship? Who else, it has been asked, than a Being strange to the human family, not originally a member of the human family, could take for His *characteristic* name the title—Child of the Race.

## II.—THE SON OF GOD.

IN the history of the birth of Jesus we are told that the angel said to Mary, 'Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest.' And again, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which is born shall be called holy, the Son of God,' or, 'the holy thing which is to be born shall be called the Son of God.'

The sonship grounded on the miracle of His birth was—taking the historian as our authority—common to Jesus and to Adam, whom he calls the Son of God because he had no human father. And it is obvious that on this ground and in this sense, no other human child could be so designated.

Assuming the truth of this story, yet two things are obvious—First: It was not on this ground that Nathanael and Peter and others called Jesus 'the Son of God,' for the manner of His birth was not known to them. And, secondly, it was not on any such meaning of the title that the enemies of Jesus founded the charge of blasphemy, for they too were ignorant of the fact.

But the fact itself is of prime importance in its relation to the character of Christ and His higher claims. It is not for us to say what is possible or

Luke i.  
31—32.  
Supernatural birth.

Luke i. 35.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Rev. Ver.

Rev. Ver.  
Margin.

Luke iii. 38.

Nathanael  
and Peter.

His birth  
and sinless-  
ness.

On Luke i.  
31-38.

not possible with God, or whether the perfect sinlessness of the child of Mary could have been secured in connection with a natural birth. But we can see how fit it was that a supernatural birth should be chosen as the means of securing sinlessness. We may admit with Godet that perfect holiness was not the necessary consequence of the miracle, 'for holiness is a fact of volition, not of nature.' But the miraculous birth was at least the *negative* condition of the spotless holiness of Jesus. 'Entering into human life in this way, He was placed in the normal condition of man before his fall, and put in a position to fulfil the career originally set before man, in which he was to advance from innocence to holiness. He was simply freed from the obstacle which, owing to the way in which we are born, hinders us from accomplishing this task.'

See 'The Gospels: Their Age and Authorship.' By the Author. p. 171-7. See also Article by Dr. David Brown on 'The Miraculous Conception,' in the 'British and Foreign Evangelical Review,' July, 1879.

John and Mary.

The knowledge of the disciples of the sinlessness of Jesus was not grounded on the manner of his birth, but on the patent facts of His life. But when at length they came to know the manner of His birth, they found the key to what would otherwise have defied explanation—showing the high, the unique sense in which He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and—what could be said of no other man—separate from sinners, yet a partaker of their nature. We are at no loss to conjecture how the facts came at last to be known. 'When Jesus was glorified' His mother found a home with the disciple whom Jesus loved. Mary and John were henceforth bound together as mother and son. How their hearts must have burned within them as they 'spake often one to another' of the wondrous past, which neither of them fully understood till it was past and illumined by the divine light of

Pentecost. The life of labour and poverty in Nazareth; the public life, still of poverty, though of divine beneficence; Gethsemane; Pilate's bar; the cross; the crown of thorns; the grave; the resurrection; the ascension—what a retrospect! In this strange history, still the world's wonder and joy, they saw the very heart of God revealed to man. Mary's tongue was then unloosed. The time had come for revealing those things which she had long hidden in her heart. An earlier disclosure of them would have provoked idle wonder, doubt, and doubtful disputation; but to have concealed them now would have left much of the life and work and character of Jesus for ever unexplained.

Luke ii. 19.

The denial of the miraculous birth of Jesus is only a part of the general denial of the miraculous in His life and person, and need not be dealt with here. But as we read the narrative we cannot help exclaiming with Godet, 'What exquisite delicacy this scene displays! What simplicity and majesty in the dialogue! Not one word too many, not one too few. A narrative so perfect could only have emanated from the holy sphere within which the mystery was accomplished. A later origin would inevitably have betrayed itself by some foreign element.'

But it is mainly by the history of His life we have to ascertain what was meant by the title, 'Son of God,' given to Christ on many occasions, and accepted by Him when so given. It is scarcely necessary to recall instances which have already been cited. At the very beginning of His ministry Nathanael called Him the Son of God. And at the end of His ministry the charge alleged against Him by the Sanhedrim,

John i. 49.

Beginning  
and end of  
ministry.

and on which they wrested from Pilate the sentence of death, was that ‘He made Himself the Son of God.’ We have seen that throughout His ministry He never once checked those who called Him ‘Son of God,’ or who in other forms acknowledged Him to be superhuman; and that when adjured by the High Priest to say whether He was the Son of God, He solemnly averred that He was.

Matt. xxvi.  
Mark xiv.  
Luke xxii.

While not choosing to designate Himself in so many words ‘the Son of God,’ Jesus used a term which indicated even more definitely that there was something unique in the sonship which He claimed. He called God ‘*the Father*’ and Himself ‘*the Son*.’ Some of His words must be quoted again: ‘No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son.’ Again, ‘That hour knoweth no man . . . neither the Son, but the Father.’ Then in John several times—‘The Father loveth the Son;’ ‘He that believeth on the Son;’ ‘Every one which seeth the Son;’ ‘That the Father may be glorified in the Son.’ In the great prayer of the seventeenth chapter we find the words, ‘Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.’ And in the final commission given to His Apostles we read, ‘Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost.’

‘The Son.’  
Matt. xi. 27.

Mark xiii.  
32.

John iii.  
35—36,  
v. 19,  
vi. 40,  
xiv. 13,  
xvii. 1.

The Trinity.

Can the words of Jesus Christ, with reference to Himself as ‘*the Son*’ of ‘*the Father*,’ and generally with reference to the Divine sonship ascribed to Him while on earth, be interpreted legitimately without the admission that He claimed parity with God the Father? That one may fully understand His words and His claims, we must refer to facts and sayings which are recorded by the Evangelists.

And first and chief of these is the way in which He met the charges of blasphemy which were brought against Him. The law of Israel against blasphemy reads thus: 'Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, he shall surely be put to death, all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land. When he blasphemeth the name (of the Lord) he shall be put to death.' The cases of real or imputed blasphemy which occur in the Old Testament, all wear this distinctive character; they are a *reproaching*, a contempt, a designed insult upon the name and attributes of the living God, or of some supposed deity. He would be guilty of 'blaspheming the Name, who should apply that fearful and glorious name' to an idol, inanimate or animate: and, most evidently, he would not be less chargeable with the crime, who could have the boldness to apply it unwarrantably to *himself*. Blasphemy, in the Jewish sense, is described by Schleusner to be 'the saying or doing anything by which the majesty of God is insulted, uttering curses or reproaches against God, speaking impiously, arrogating and taking to one's self that which belongs to God.' In this latter cause the Jews manifestly understood it, when they said, 'We stone Thee for blasphemy, and that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.'

Charges of blasphemy.

Lev. xxiv.  
15—16.Dr. Pye  
Smith's  
Scripture  
Testimony.  
Vol. I.,  
435—6.The law of  
blasphemy.

John x. 33.

The first occasion on which Jesus was charged with blasphemy was when He said to the paralytic, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be (are) forgiven thee.' The attempts which have been made to get rid of what seems at least to be the purport of Christ's action on this occasion, as we have already put it, only confirm the

First  
occasion.  
Matt. ix.  
2—7.  
Mark ii. 5.

common interpretation of His words. If it be said that Jesus did not assume to Himself the actual right to give a judicial forgiveness of sin, but intended only to *declare* to the person whom He saw to be penitent that his sins were forgiven of God, it is obvious that such a *declaration* would have furnished no colour for the charge of blasphemy which the Jews so promptly advanced.

Oxford  
Sermons,  
Introduc-  
tion,  
p. xxxiv.

Dr. Abbott  
on forgiving  
sin.

Dr. Abbott says, 'No blow can be struck so effectually against the notion that forgiveness is a sacerdotal and technical act, as by exhibiting forgiveness as a natural human faculty, the highest energy of which the soul is capable, the truest form of sacrifice, based on the deepest faith. The nature of self-sacrificing forgiveness, the uplifting effect upon the sinful, and its power to justify all those who have faith to accept it . . . these phenomena are verifiable by the commonest experiences of the commonest lives. It will then be seen that the power of remitting sins is imparted to every Christian by the Spirit of Christ, and that it was a part of His good news that He had brought down this power from heaven, in a strength before unknown, and diffused it among men.'

Matt. vi. 12.

Luke xi. 4.

Matt. vi.  
14-15.

Mark xi. 25.

The author of these words overlooks the distinction between our forgiving offences committed *against ourselves*, and our forgiving sins committed *against God*. Christ taught His disciples to pray, 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;' or, 'Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.' And He said, 'If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' 'When ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.' But the fact is too obvious to



need proof or illustration, that the forgiveness which Christ enjoined on His disciples so solemnly, was the forgiveness of offences committed *against them*. If they forgave not such offences, neither would God forgive *their* offences *against Him*.

The way to destroy the 'sacerdotal' claim to have power to forgive sins is not to extend that claim to every Christian, but to deny it to all Christians. It would be a strange and daring travesty of the Jewish doctrine that God only can forgive sins, and of Christ's way of reconciling that doctrine, which He did not deny, with His own act of forgiving the sins of the paralytic, to say that forgiveness is 'a natural human faculty,' and that the power—which must mean the right and authority—to forgive sin, is now imparted to every Christian by the Spirit of Christ. 'Reason and Scripture teach that to *pardon sin*, in the proper and complete sense, is an act to which no being is competent besides the Supreme Moral Governor of the Universe.' 'Such pardon implies a removal of the Divine displeasure itself, and of that tremendous sense and conviction of the Divine displeasure which justice requires to be produced in the consciousness of the offender; and it further implies a re-instatement in the approbation of the righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness.' The power, or right, or authority thus to pardon sin, was never claimed or exercised by the Apostles. In whatever sense they understood the words of Christ, 'whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them,' they never employed language approaching to that of Christ. Their claim was that they were ambassadors of Christ to proclaim the pardon of sin, and all the blessings of eternal life, through faith in His name. And this every preacher of the Gospel is

Dr. Fye  
Smith's  
Scripture  
Testimony,  
Vol. II. 75.

The pre-  
rogative of  
pardon.

John xx. 23.

Ex. xxxiv.  
7.

Isa. xliii. 25.

entitled to do. But to forgive sin was in the Old Testament regarded as a prerogative of Jehovah, and in the New this great prerogative is not extended to others.

Conclusion.

We are then shut up to the conclusion that when Jesus said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' He spoke under the consciousness, and by the authority, of a Higher nature. This conclusion is strengthened by the expression, 'The Son of Man upon earth.' The position of the words in the original Greek—which seems to point to His humbled condition as distinguished from His pre-existent state.

Second  
occasion.

John viii.  
56—59.

'I am.'

The next occasion on which Jesus was charged with claiming a Divine prerogative is recorded in the Gospel by John. 'Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad,' Jesus said. 'Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.' What He was understood to assert is shown by the sequel: 'Then took they up stones to cast at Him'—that is, as a blasphemer. He could at once have disavowed the construction put upon His words, if it was wrong, but He did not. 'He hid Himself, and went out of the Temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.'

Divine pre-  
existence.

Whatever doubt may be raised as to the exact force of 'I am,' there can be no doubt that He was understood to claim something Divine—that is, a Divine existence before the days of Abraham, and that He sanctioned this understanding of His words. With all this so plain, and notwithstanding, attempts have been made to find another meaning in them.

It has been affirmed, for example, that Jesus might have been said to have existed, as the Messiah, in the purpose and decree of God; that is, that He was designated to His office before Abraham was born. If such was Christ's meaning, we can only wonder that He should have chosen so misleading a form of expression, and that He should have allowed the popular misunderstanding to pass uncorrected. Moreover, to assert His pre-existence in the Divine Counsel would be to assert a mere truism—a fact as true of Abraham as of Himself. Besides, the occasion of his words excludes every interpretation but the natural and obvious one. The people understood His declarations as involving some claim of superiority to Abraham, and they demanded, 'Art Thou greater than our father Abraham? Whom makest Thou Thyself?' In reply, he said in effect, that Abraham himself had acknowledged His superiority, for he rejoiced and earnestly desired to see His day, and he saw it. The Jews not understanding, or affecting not to understand, that He spake of a prophetic vision of His day, said, 'Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?' The question now became whether Jesus existed in the days of Abraham; and in saying, 'Before Abraham was, I am, or I was,' He asserted that He had existed not only in the days of Abraham, but *before*. It is a personal existence that is spoken of throughout.

There is nothing substantially new in another form in which a personal pre-existence is denied. That there is a doctrine of pre-existence taught in the Gospel by John is admitted. But then it is not, we are told, the pre-existence of a real person, 'member of an eternally-existing essential trinity,' but of a Divine idea, 'the archetypal thought according to

Pre-existence in Divine purpose.

Personal existence before Abraham.

Ideal pre-existence.

which God made man, destined in the course of the ages to be realized, as it had never been before in all its pleromatic fulness, in Jesus Christ. And when Christ asserts His pre-existence, it is not as a recollection of a previous conscious life, but simply as an inference from His own consciousness of unity in spirit with God.' According to this theory Jesus meant to say that He realizes in His person an eternal but impersonal principle, that of the real image of God. But that the existence asserted is personal is seen from the *Ego*. 'This too is proved (as Godet says) by the comparison with Abraham. For there would have been a touch of charlatanism on the part of Jesus in suddenly substituting an impersonal principle for His Person, in His reply to the Jews, who were accusing Him of making Himself the contemporary of Abraham. If one of the two existences compared is personal, the other must be so too; otherwise this statement, marked as it is by the greatest solemnity, is not a serious one.' This saying of Christ, Godet well remarks, 'bears within itself the guarantee of its authenticity, first by its subline conciseness, then by its very meaning. For what historian would choose to put into the mouth of his hero, words which would bring upon him the imputation of being mad?'

Third  
occasion.

'I and  
Father One.'

John x.  
22-12.

At the feast of the Dedication, as we have already seen, the sayings of Jesus again involved Him in a charge of blasphemy. He had said, 'I and My Father are one,' and He was in the habit of saying, with persistent emphasis, 'My Father,' thus claiming a filial relationship to God, in which others did not share. 'The Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you

from My Father; for which of these works do ye stone Me?' They answered Him, saying, 'For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God.' His defence has already been explained, but I add the following from Dr. Pye-Smith :

'The Lord Jesus might have answered: I accept your construction, but I deny your charge. I have uttered no impiety, for I have claimed no more than I have a right to claim. I am the Messiah, whose goings forth have been of old, even from the days of eternity. I am not only a man like yourselves, but I existed and acted before My taking flesh, as the Shepherd of Israel, the Lord of David, the King whose throne is for ever and ever.

'And if this were true, why did He not so answer? We reply, that admitting the truth of the assertion supposed, there are good reasons for His having declined to make it. It would have been inconsistent with the present stage of the advancement of His dispensation; it would have been a departure from the rule of reserve which we have ample evidence that He most carefully adhered to; and He had before Him another mode of proceeding which was in accordance with His usual practice as a teacher.

'But, upon the Unitarian hypothesis, no motive can be imagined why He should not have met the accusation with the clearest and most pointed denial. Though He saw it not to be proper, as yet, to avow Himself publicly to be the Messiah, there could be no reason why He should omit to protest that He was merely a man, such as other men; and every consideration of piety and veracity, and all other good principles, demanded the most prompt and un-

Scripture  
Testimony,  
Vol. I.,  
p. 459.

The  
Unitarian  
hypothesis.

ambiguous declaration against the blasphemy with which He was charged. This course, however, He did not take.'

Fourth  
occasion.  
Matt. xxvi.  
Mark xiv.

The  
Sanhedrim.

The last occasion on which Jesus was charged with blasphemy was when He was adjured by the High Priest to say whether He was the Son of God, and when the Sanhedrim demanded a sentence of death from Pilate on the ground of a Jewish law which required that the blasphemer should die. To what I have already said on the words and conduct of Christ before the Sanhedrim and before Pilate, I need only add the following from Dr. Hanna :

Our Lord's  
Life on  
Earth  
(R.T.S. Ed.)  
p. 485.

'If only a man, if not the Co-eternal, Co-equal, Son of the Father, in speaking of Himself as He did before the Jewish Council, Jesus was guilty of an extent, an audacity, an effrontery of pretension, which the blindest, wildest, most arrogant religious enthusiast has never exceeded. The only way to free His character as a man from the stain of such egregious vanity and presumption, is to recognise Him as the Son of the Highest. If the Divinity that was in Him be denied, the humanity no longer stands stainless.'

His habi-  
tual style.

Thus reviewing all the occasions on which Jesus Christ was charged with blasphemy, we are shut up to the conclusion, than when He sanctioned, and, by sanctioning, assumed, the title 'Son of God,' He really did claim, what He was understood to claim, parity or equality with God. This interpretation is confirmed by His habitual style in speaking of Himself as having 'come,' or 'come into the world.' We should be greatly surprised to hear a man, simply because he was conscious that he was working the work of God, saying

of himself, 'I am come to do the will of God.' There is no example even of a prophet thus describing his mission. But the words of Christ are more explicit than even these: 'I proceeded forth and came from God' (Rev. Ver. 'I came forth and am come from God'); 'for neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me.' 'For judgment I am come into this world.' 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.' 'The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.' 'The Son of Man is come not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many.'

'These expressions (it is admitted) very naturally indicate that Jesus was the chosen messenger of God to the human race.' This is true. But they indicate more. They indicate clearly and directly that He had existed in another state or sphere before His birth into this world. Taken by themselves they may prove nothing more than pre-existence, not necessarily a Divine pre-existence—only such a pre-existence as Arianism admits. But if Arianism be on either ground untenable, the pre-existence claimed by Christ must have been an eternal and Divine pre-existence. 'O Father, glorify Thou Me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.'

We might pause here and content ourselves with saying, that in the conclusion to which the study of the words which led to a charge of blasphemy, and of Christ's defences, brings us, we have a test of every theory which professes to explain the Divine Sonship ascribed to Christ. But the endeavour is made in so many forms to make what was special to Christ common to man, either by an undue lowering of Christ or an

John viii.  
12.

John ix. 39.  
xvi. 28.

Matt. xviii.  
11.  
xx. 28.

Keim.

'Coming'  
from  
another  
state.

John xvii. 4.

A test of  
every  
theory.

undue exalting of man, that it may be needful to consider some of them.

There is a sonship of God which belongs to man as man. Man bearing the image of God, is, by his very nature, more than a *creature* of God—he is, what no other creature is, the child of God. This honour, with the responsibility which it involves, belongs to all men, however far, like the prodigal son, they may have wandered from their Father.

John i.  
11—12.  
(Rev. Ver.),  
See Rom.  
viii. 14—17.  
II. Cor. vi.  
16—18.  
I. John iii. 1  
—‘Children’  
(Rev. Ver.)

And there is a special sonship which belongs to believers in Christ. Christ ‘came to His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God.’ This great honour and privilege—the nature and significance of which I do not consider now—was foreshadowed in the Old Testament:—‘I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring My sons from far, and My daughters from the ends of the earth, even every one that is called by My name.’

Isa. xlii.  
6—7.

Human  
Sonship.

But is this human sonship essentially the same as the sonship ascribed to, and claimed by, Jesus Christ? According to some it is—for, they say, the Divine and human natures are essentially one; they differ not in kind, but in degree. Mr. Ward Beecher says: ‘Man’s nature and God’s nature do not differ in kind, but in degree of the same attributes. A human soul is not something other and different from the divine soul. It is as like it as the son is like the father. God is father, man is son. As God in our place becomes human—such being the similarity of the essential nature—so man in God becomes divine.’

The Life of  
Christ,  
p. 523.  
H. Ward  
Beecher.

Biographical  
Essays,  
p. 121—2.  
Letter to  
Chunder  
Sen.

‘Christianity is Christianity,’ says Mr. Max Muller, ‘by this one fundamental truth, that as God is the Father of man, so truly, and not practically or meta-



phorically only, man is the son of God, participating in God's very essence and nature, though separated from God by self and sin. This oneness of nature between the Divine and the human does not lower the concept of God by bringing it nearer to the level of humanity; on the contrary, it raises the true concept of man and brings it nearer to its true ideal.' Again: 'The true relation between God and man had been dimly foreseen by many prophets and poets, but Christ was the first to proclaim that relation in clear and simple language. He called Himself the Son of God, and He was the first-born Son of God in the fullest sense of that word. But He never made Himself equal with the Father in whom He lived and moved and had His being. [The Jews, we have seen, understood Him to do so, and He did not deny their construction of His words.] He was man in the new and true sense of the word, and in the new and true sense of the word He was God.'

Max Müller.

On this theory Jesus was God because He was man! and, I suppose I must add, He was man because He was God! The reader needs no assistance, recalling the pages in which we have reviewed together the words of Christ Himself, to discover the fallacy of this representation. Not one word of His can be found to support the doctrine that God and man are 'one in essence and nature,' nor one word to support the doctrine that He was Son of God, only as all men are sons of God, but many words to prove the contrary.

Strange result.

Besides, is it true that there is no essential difference between the nature of God and the nature of man? God Infinite, man finite; God eternal and self-existent, who 'only hath immortality'; man existing only by the will of God; God absolute and independent, man

No essential difference between Divine and Human.

dependent on God for every breath he breathes : and yet no essential difference between them ! There are higher intelligences than man—angels and archangels, at least one archangel. Let us conceive of one of these that he has risen to the highest height possible to creature : between him and the Infinite Eternal there still lies a space which cannot be described as less than infinite. Between created intelligences, the highest and lowest, the difference is only one of degree, and it may be said to be infinitesimally small. But between the highest created intelligence and God, the difference is not one of degree but of essence ; for there is no possibility of the created rising to the uncreated. God Himself cannot make a God.

The Eternal  
Word—the  
Creator.

John i. 3.

Col i. 16—17  
(Rev. Ver.)  
See also  
Heb. i. 2.

Gnosticism.

These considerations remain in full force, and are strengthened in the presence of the Apostolic doctrine that the Eternal Word, whom they identify with Christ, was the Creator of the universe. The Apostle John says : ‘ All things were made by Him ; and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.’ The Apostle Paul says : ‘ In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities and powers ; all things have been created through Him and unto Him ; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.’ This does not diminish the natural distance between God and man. On the contrary, it gives it emphasis. The heresy of the Colossian teachers took its rise in their cosmical speculations, deeming it necessary to bridge over the chasm which separates God from man, from the world, from matter, by supposing the existence of beings in what may be regarded as a graduated scale

down from the Infinite God to man. 'It was, therefore, natural,' as Dr. Lightfoot says, 'that the Apostle in replying should lay stress on the function of the Word in the creation and government of the world. This is the aspect of His work most prominent in the first of the two distinctly Christological passages. The Apostle there predicates of the Word, not only prior but *absolute* existence. All things were created through Him, are sustained in Him, are tending towards Him. Thus He is the beginning, middle, and end of creation. This He is because He is the very *image* of the Invisible God, because in Him dwells the *plenitude* of the Deity.' We may not know all that is meant by the Apostle when he calls Christ the Image of the Invisible God, but we know that he does not intend to detract from His Personal Divinity, for he says within a few sentences that 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.'

On Colossians, p.116.

Col. i.  
15—19.  
ii. 9—10.

I am not appealing now to the Apostles to prove what Christ was, but only to show that what they say of His relation to man as specially man's Creator, gives no sanction to the theory that there is no essential difference between the Divine and human natures, or between the Divine and human Sonship.

Nor is the difference between the Sonship of Christ and the sonship of man obliterated by calling the pre-existent Christ the archetypal man or the archetype of humanity. This idea differs but little from what is called the ideal-man theory. That Jesus Incarnate realized in Himself the very fulness of the Divine idea of our nature, we not only admit but have maintained. But the question still remains, Does this reach, does it rise to, the essential idea of Christ's

The Archetypal Man.

Beyschlag.

The  
Christology  
of the four  
Gospels the  
same.

nature as the Son of God? Beyschlag, who holds that it does, gives us this advantage in argument with him, that he believes in the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and holds at the same time that the Christology of John is the Christology of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. On this basis, the only question we have to ask is: What do the four Gospels teach concerning Christ? or, What does Christ say concerning Himself in the four Gospels? According to Beyschlag the Christ of the four is 'a Christ, who, when He calls Himself the Son of Man, means to assert that He is the man *par excellence*, the ideal man in whom all humanity's possibilities are realized; and who, when He calls Himself the Son of God, means to assert no metaphysical identity of nature, but only to claim for Himself a sonship based on ethical affinity, and manifesting itself by intimate fellowship of spirit, and therefore a sonship which, while in *degree* peculiar to Himself, is in *kind* common to all good men.' On this theory the terms 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God' mean essentially the same thing. Christ was the Son of Man, because all humanity's possibilities were realized in Him; and He was the Son of God for the same reason, being only 'in degree' higher than other men! Dr. Abbot speaks of Him as 'manifested to be the perfect Son of God in Heaven, because He was the perfect Son of Man on earth.' But then His disciples believed Him to be the Son of God on earth, and both they and His enemies had no idea that this sonship was based on His 'ethical affinity with God,' in plainer words, on His moral likeness to God. Such an explanation of it would have saved His life.

Oxford  
Sermons,  
p. 170.

Son of God  
on earth.

That our human sonship, at least as redeemed, is

not to be distinguished from Christ's Divine Sonship, is sometimes inferred, not legitimately, from the Headship of Christ. 'Surely the body shares the essential nature of the head,' it is said. The Apostle Paul must be our guide in this matter. Following words, already quoted, in which the work of creation, and absolute pre-existence, are ascribed to Christ, we read—'And He is the head of the body, the Church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.' A few verses farther on the Apostle says, 'In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.' And in the same chapter we read, 'Let no man rob you of your prize . . . not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.'

Dr. Lightfoot says: 'We may paraphrase the Apostle's meaning as follows—You dispute much about the successive grades of angels; you distinguish each grade by its special title; you can tell how each order was generated from the preceding: you assign to each its proper degree of worship. Meanwhile you have ignored or you have degraded Christ. I tell you it is not so. He is first and foremost, Lord of heaven and earth, far above all thrones and dominations, all principedoms or powers, far above any dignity and every potentate—whether earthly or heavenly—whether angel or demon or man—that evokes your reverence or excites your fear.'

Again—'And not only does He (Christ) hold this position of absolute priority and sovereignty over the universe—the natural creation. He stands also in

The Head-  
ship of  
Christ.

Col. i.  
16–19.

ii. 9–10.

vv. 18–19.  
(Rev. Ver.)

i. 16–17.

Head of the  
material  
creation.

Head of the  
spiritual  
creation.

the same relation to the Church—the new spiritual creation. *He is its Head and it is His body.* This is His prerogative, because He is the source and the beginning of its life, being the Firstborn from the dead. Thus in all things—in the spiritual order as in the natural—in the church as in the World—He is found to have the pre-eminence.’

The Headship ascribed to Christ by the Apostle includes first of all, then, and chiefly, Sovereignty or Rulership. He is Head of all principality and power as well as of the Church, and ‘He is Head over all things to the Church.’ He is Lord of all—and only He; no one shares His throne. And in His Headship of the church this further is included, that He is the source of its spiritual life and strength. It is ‘from Him,’ out of His fulness, that the Church ‘increaseth with the increase of God.’ In His own words, He is the vine, they are the branches. ‘Apart from Him,’ they can bring forth no fruit.

But in all this there is nothing to imply or suggest that the Body shares the essential nature of the Head, which, if true, would justify the assertion that there is no essential difference between our human sonship and His Divine Sonship. The moral likeness of the members to the Head is secured by the grace of God, who hath fore-ordained His people to be conformed to the image of His Son. But the Son Himself never confounded His Sonship with theirs, but, as we have seen, invariably and with emphasis, distinguished His filial relation to God from theirs—never saying ‘Our Father,’ but ‘My Father and your Father,’ and saying ‘My Father’ in a way which laid Him open to the charge of blasphemy. The Apostolic doctrine of His Headship does not obliterate this distinction, but,

Eph. i, 22.

Col. ii, 19.

Moral  
likeness.  
Rom. viii.  
29.  
(Rev. Ver.)

But the  
Head and  
the Body  
not con-  
founded.

on the contrary, confirms it, ascribing to Him, as it does, universal creation and universal sovereignty.

The fact is seldom noticed that Jesus Christ never prayed *with* His disciples. At least it is not said that He did. And the reason is very obvious. Much as there was in common between Him and them, intimate as was their fellowship, and gracious as was His love in raising them into oneness with Himself, there was a fundamental difference morally, and in their relation to God, which rendered *common* prayer impossible, except to a limited extent. To see that it was so we have only to compare the two prayers, that commonly called The Lord's Prayer, but really the Disciples' Prayer, and that Lord's own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John. Both Christ and His disciples could say, 'Hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven.' Possibly Christ in His humiliation could join His disciples in saying, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' But beyond this He could not go. The disciples must stand apart in silent awe, while Jesus prayed the prayer in the Gospel by John. He there prays *for* them, not *with* them; and for them, not as friend prays for friend or equal for equal, but in a style which no one but Himself has ever used or had a right to use. The absence of any sign of conscious imperfection has already been noted. But singular as this is, it is not more remarkable than the revelation which His words give us of His unique relation to God: 'O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was'—and along with it His unique power to save, 'Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy

John xvii.  
11.

v. 2.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee, even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given Him, to them He should give eternal life.' There is not a petition, not a sentence, in all this prayer in which His disciples could join. It is an utterance not merely of His loving concern for those who then followed Him, and for all who should follow Him in after ages, but the utterance of One who stood high above them all, who was conscious of a glorious past before He was seen on earth, and of power to gather redeemed men into a glorious future.

v. 24.

II. Peter i.  
4.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Partakers of  
the Divine  
nature —  
What ?

The only Scripture in which men are ever spoken of as 'divine' is in the second Epistle of St. Peter, where we read—'Whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises, that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.' Nothing can be plainer than that the divine nature of which this Apostle says we become partakers by being delivered from the corruption that is in the world, is the divine holiness. The holy angels are in this sense partakers of the divine nature, but in no sense are they Gods, or partakers of that which differentiates the Creator from the creature—making the Creator the worshipped, and the creature, though he be an archangel, only the worshipper.

Pantheistic  
interpreta-  
tion.

The Pantheistic interpretation of the Sonship of Christ may be noticed, although it scarcely needs argument to expose its fallacy. Renan asks whether the men who have best comprehended God—including Plato and St. Paul—were Deists or Pantheists? and says that such a question has no meaning. 'The physical and metaphysical proofs of the existence of



God were quite indifferent to them. They felt the divine within themselves.' 'We must place Jesus,' he says, 'in the first rank of this great family of the sons of God. Jesus,' he goes on to say, 'had no visions; God did not speak to Him as to one outside of Himself; God was in Him; He felt Himself with God, and He drew from His heart all He said of the Father. He lived in the bosom of God by constant communication with Him.' And on this ground, and in this sense, 'Jesus believed Himself to be the Son of God.'

Renan.

It has often been said that without definition controversy is either hopeless or useless. Now Renan's explanation of the belief or consciousness of Jesus Christ, that He was the Son of God, derives the very little speciousness or plausibility which it possesses from the absence of all definition, and the consequent emptiness of its phrases. St. Paul and his Master Jesus Christ were, we are to suppose, neither Theists nor Pantheists. They simply felt the divine within themselves. But what is the divine which they felt within themselves? A moral sentiment, or what? something essentially human? or something super-human? The language may please the ear for a moment. But what is the reality behind it? We can only answer that the terminology of Renan, while professedly setting both Theism and Pantheism aside, is purely Pantheistic, and is intelligible only in the light of Pantheism. And even then, it is still as 'empty' as ever of any meaning, except what may be found in the merest sentimentalism. It is '*vox et præterea nihil*,' except as it hides or disguises untruth.

St. Paul  
and his  
Master.

Tested by the words of Christ Himself and by the letters of St. Paul, the Pantheistic interpretation of

Rom. i. 4.

Christ's Sonship is little short of an offence to common sense. In those four letters of St. Paul, the genuineness of which is admitted by the most destructive critics, the Apostle, instead of regarding himself as 'a true son of God' in common with Christ—and using such language respecting himself as Jesus used habitually—speaks of Jesus Christ as alone 'the Son of God,' 'declared,' or 'definitely marked out,' to have been such, by His resurrection from the dead. According to St. Paul, all that Christ professed to be while He ministered among men was 'made good,' and placed beyond all doubt, by His resurrection. Instead of claiming to be of the same family of 'sons of God' as Jesus Christ, the Apostle invariably classes himself with the human family of sinners, whom, he says, Christ died to save, and of whom he asserts Christ to be now the Lord and the Judge.

xiv. 8-10.

Danger of rhetoric.

Rhetoric is in great danger of falling, or, as some might put it, rising, into a Pantheistic tone. Thus we find one who is far from being a Pantheist writing, 'He who as a boy was anxious to be absorbed in His Father and His Father's affairs, became as a man the conscious abode of God. Here indeed emerges the sublimest and most distinctive feature of His Personality. In Him, as in no other, God lived; He lived as no other ever did in God. Their communion was a union which authorised the saying, I and My Father are one—He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. His consciousness was full of God, was consciousness of God. Fellowship with men did not lessen it; solitude only made it more real. The society of the sinful did not disturb His serene certainty, or becloud for a moment His sense of the indwelling presence. . . . Since Jesus lived God has been another and nearer

Being to man; and the reason lies in that universal and ideal significance of His Person which made it a symbol as well as a reality, and a symbol that showed that what God was to Jesus He might be to every man, and what Jesus was to God every man ought to be.'

As to the last of these sentences, it is not true that the Incarnation is a symbol of what God may be to every man. And as to the rest, whatever of truth and beauty there may be in it, those who know how Pantheism—as, for example, by the pen of Renan—can speak of Jesus, will perceive that it is capable of a construction far below, and indeed inconsistent with, the Scriptural representation of the person of Jesus. And it behoves us to avoid language which, while it seems to imply the Godhead of Christ, can be used in common by men who mean nothing more than to express a Pantheistic sentiment.

Following up the plan of this work, what we have to do is, not to prove the unique Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ by the authority of Scripture in general, but to ascertain the meaning of Christ's own testimony on the subject, and thereby to test such theories as are proposed to explain it, or, it may be, to explain it away: theories, that is, proposed by writers who acknowledge in the main the genuineness of the utterances ascribed to Jesus Christ in the Gospels.

Such a writer is Keim, in his *Life of Jesus of Nazara*. Rationalistic as he is, and arbitrary in rejecting portions of the Gospels on no other ground than that they seem to his consciousness of what is true to be spurious and unhistorical, he nevertheless admits that Christ used language in which He claimed

The Incarnation a symbol?

Keim on Christ's language.

Keim,  
Vol. I., p. 57.

IV., p. 67.

. 68.

p. 69.

Mat. xi. 27.

See  
pp. 41 - 44,  
*ante.*

very extraordinary prerogatives. As to the sayings of Christ in general, he says that they 'bear a peculiar mental stamp which no successor, no evangelist, Jew or Gentile, not even Paul himself, could have invented.' 'The history of Jesus (he says) bears throughout the appearance of probability.' The Gospels represent Christ as 'a divinely-prepared personality, that wrestles and struggles, that inwardly perfects itself, but outwardly perishes with a loud cry of anguish.' Of the titles assumed or allowed by Christ, he says, 'The Son of Man was always the chosen of God, and the Son of God remained a human being, to whose nobility it belonged to be Godlike and yet a man.' Jesus 'would certainly explain His Sonship, not at all in the sense of the Messianic, but entirely in the sense of the spiritual, Sonship, which He ascribed to the pious, as a Divine relationship in knowledge and love of the Highest.' Rejecting a Pauline or Johannine interpretation of the title 'Son of God,' he says, 'the standard of our explanation of the words must lie in the utterances of Jesus about Himself; and His clearest and loftiest utterance is and remains the great confession of the Son who knows God and is known of God, and is, because of His great knowledge, appointed Lord over all.'

This 'clearest and loftiest utterance' is in these oft-quoted words: 'All things are delivered to Me of My Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him.' Our interpretation of these words has already been given. What is Keim's? That the words are genuine he argues: 'There is no more violent criticism (he says) than that which, since Baur's time, Strauss has intro-

duced—the repudiation of a passage which, as the culminating point of Jesus' description of Himself, does not so easily adapt itself to the level of humanity as do others. The profundity of the passage, the similarity of other passages, the recognition of a justifiable egoism in the creator of a new religion, and, finally, a little more diligence in interpretation, ought to have prevented this violence, which springs from a wish to lop away from the sublime spirit that dwelt among us the pinions of His Divine-human consciousness.'

Whether Keim's own interpretation is not chargeable with 'violence,' and whether it does not 'spring from a wish to lop away from the sublime spirit that dwelt among us,' a very essential part of His Divine-human consciousness, let the reader judge. 'In this regal confession of Jesus (he says) we discover a character sublime, it is true, and godlike, but not Divine in the sense of the Fourth Gospel; on the contrary, a genuine human character.' But this 'genuinely human character' rose, by some faculty or internal energy which no one else ever possessed, into a knowledge of the Infinite One, to which no other human being has ever attained.

'To the man who, for the first time since the creation, penetrated into the nature of God, there must have belonged a dignity much greater than the human dignity which He Himself was the first to announce to all, a dignity that challenged, not equality of rights, but recognition, even on the part of God. And this man, who, little among men, pointed out to humanity its destiny and the divinity of its nature, must have had a character which to God Himself possessed an interest, opened up a problem, exhibited

IV.,  
pp. 63—64.

Keim's  
interpreta-  
tion of  
Matt. xi. 27.

IV., p. 65.

a relationship, and, by anything belonging to him, even by the strong contrast between his inner and outer existence, won from God love and sympathy and help, so that God bowed Himself to his person, to his prayer, to his undertaking, and, to the men who understood his lowness, but did not understand his loftiness, revealed him in those hearts that should acknowledge him as God acknowledged him.'

Let the reader pause over this ingenious, but not very intelligible, endeavour to explain Christ's words without finding in them what seems to be in them. We are to understand that, for the first time from the creation of the world, a man appeared who scaled the heavens and 'penetrated into the nature of the Infinite God.' And to this day this man stands alone in his great achievement—the world even now knowing no more of God than what he of Nazareth has been pleased to reveal. So extraordinary an attainment, especially on the part of one in so low a condition, 'challenged recognition even on the part of God,' and 'opened up a problem,' apparently for the mind of God Himself; and 'won even from God love and sympathy and help, so that God bowed to his person and to his undertaking.' Yea, more—God takes this mysterious man into partnership with Himself in the government of the universe. 'All things are delivered unto Me of My Father.' 'The Father judgeth no one, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' 'Because of his great knowledge,' Keim says, 'God appointed him Lord of all.' It is as if God was struck with surprise by the unique achievement of Jesus in 'penetrating into His nature,' and felt as if He was a debtor to him and must exalt him to share His throne. A heathenish conception this

Wonderful  
achievement of the  
Man Jesus,

God  
appointed  
Him 'Lord  
of all.'

surely, not a Christian. In view of it the question how this lowly Nazarene, and he alone of all mankind, rose to such a knowledge of the Infinite One, is a problem too insignificant to trouble us. Happen as it might, the Nazarene has been rewarded by being made the *Alter Ego* of God!

Whether such an explanation of Christ's Sonship does not do violence to common sense, as well as to Scripture, may be left to the reader to decide. That it is in flagrant opposition to Christ's own idea of Himself, needs no proof beyond what has been given. He, according to Himself, was not a man who had attained a wisdom which entitled Him to share the throne of God, but 'the Son' who had proceeded from the Father to make the Father known to men.

Christ  
according  
to Himself.

Finally. All theories of the Sonship ascribed to Christ may be tested by the question, Whom shall we worship? 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,' is the law and spirit of the entire Old Testament. It is equally the law and spirit of the New. The last of the seers of God was greatly moved by the presence of the angel who had made known to him some of the glories of heaven, and fell at his feet to worship. We may wonder that one so enlightened should do it. But yet the impulse which prostrated him before the angel was not unnatural. He did it a second time. And on both occasions he received a rebuke and command which, coming at the very end of the revelation of God to men, may be regarded as putting a final divine seal on the teaching of the whole book. 'See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant of thee and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of

Worship a  
final test.

Rev. xix. 10.

xxii. 8-9.

this book—*Worship God.* Jesus was worshipped by Peter far more distinctly and explicitly than was the angel by John; and by Thomas when he exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God.' But He never once said, 'See thou do it not, for I am the fellow-servant of thee and of thy brethren the prophets.' Surely this indicates an essential difference between the sonship which entitled Christ to divine worship, and the sonship possible to men or angels—for angels are called 'sons of God' in the Book of Job—a sonship which, instead of receiving worship, forbids it, and, in a filial concern for the Divine honour, says, 'See thou do it not.'

The only way of evading this conclusion is by giving to worship a new and unscriptural interpretation, at least one that is vague and misleading. Dr. Abbott contrasts two methods of rising to the worship of Christ. Speaking of those whom he calls 'conservative Christians,' he says, 'Their path to the worship of Christ lies through a kind of syllogism thus: Worship is the feeling due to God. The Scriptures prove Christ to be God. Therefore the Scriptures prove that Christ is to be worshipped.' In contrast with this method Dr. Abbott says, 'But the path traced out by the liberal school to lead them to the worship of Christ is altogether different: we see in righteous worship three elements—love, trust, and reverence. For the development of these feelings Nature, that is, the Word of God, seems to have been moulding mankind from the beginning, inculcating reverence through the teaching of non-human nature, and love and trust through the training of the family and society. Christ, taking up the Divine Word [Nature], has not only developed these feelings in us

Abbott's  
Oxford  
Sermons,  
p. 28.

The natural  
worship of  
Christ.



still further, but has also attached them to Himself as their object. Hence we worship Him ; not led by the demonstration of a syllogism, but because we feel more trust and love and reverence for Him than for any other, and because we cannot think of the Father unless our thoughts pass upward through the thought of the Son. For us He sits at the right hand of God, not merely because St. Stephen saw Him there eighteen hundred years ago, but because our spirits place Him, and cannot but place Him, by the side of the Majesty on high. To Him and through Him we offer our petitions, not because of the proto-martyr's precedent, but because, when we lift the wishes of our hearts to heaven, He is our Treasure there ; and *where our treasure is, there must our hearts be also*. Surely this, the natural worship of Jesus, is the purest and highest, as well as the safest—to worship Him because one's instincts dictate it.'

I make no attempt to discover the meaning of obscure expressions and sentiments in this passage. My only point is, the contrast between the two grounds on which we may be led to worship Christ—first, because we believe on the authority of Scripture that He is God, or, secondly, because 'our instincts dictate it,' 'feeling more trust, and love, and reverence for Him than for any other.' Dr. Abbott considers the second of these as 'surely' the 'safest.' The authority of Scripture is less trustworthy than our human instincts! We may not rely on the 'precedent of St. Stephen,' who worshipped Jesus by asking Him to receive his spirit ; we may not rely on the precedent of the angel who forbade John to worship him, and told him to worship God ; and, we must add, we may not rely on the precedent of Jesus Christ who sanctioned the

Scriptural  
authority or  
human  
instincts ?

Polytheism  
and saint-  
worship.

Jewish doctrine—that worship is due to God only, and yet allowed men to worship Himself. But we may rely on the ‘instinct’ which led Cornelius to fall down before Peter to worship him, and the ‘instinct’ which led John to fall down before the angel to worship him ! The instincts of ancient heathendom led enlightened Greeks and Romans to worship a multitude of beings intermediate between the Most High God and man. The instincts of the larger part of modern Christendom lead, and for many centuries have led, men to worship a host of saints who are supposed to have more than mortal power to prevail with God and man, justifying themselves by the plea that their saint-worship is of a lower order than their worship of God. On Dr. Abbott’s principle, Polytheism is wrong only because its objects of worship were imaginary ; while saint-worship is entirely justified, the saints worshipped being known and honoured realities. If we worship Christ, not because we believe Him to be Divine, but ‘because we feel more trust, and love, and reverence for Him than for any other,’ then we may, we must, render to others a worship proportioned to the trust, and love, and reverence one feels towards them !

If by this doctrine it is attempted to diminish the distance between our human and Christ’s Divine saintship, or to maintain that there is no essential difference between them, it is enough, after our review of Christ’s words, that Christ and the men of His age were entire strangers to it, and that it is in direct antagonism to the claim solemnly made by Christ, and on the ground of which he was charged with blasphemy.

The  
disciples.

We are surprised at the slowness of the disciples to

understand all that Christ was; but we are surprised likewise, in view of what we know of the national dread of all approach to idolatry, at the readiness with which they called Him 'the Son of God' at the very beginning of His ministry. It could not have been from the circumstances of His birth, as we have seen, for these were not known. It may have been in part at least from the circumstances of His baptism and the voice which came from heaven. And they may have been prepared for it by a truer understanding of prophecy than was common to their age. How far they were influenced, if at all, by the uninspired literature of the period preceding the birth of Jesus, it is impossible to say. But it is interesting to note that in that literature there are very exalted, though often obscure and contradictory, conceptions of the Coming One. Thus in the oldest part of the 'Book of Enoch,' which dates from between 150 and 130 B.C., the Messiah is expressly designated the Son of God—'I and My Son'—implying, as the connection shows, not indeed essential Sonship, but infinite superiority over the other servants of God. In a book called 'The Psalter of Solomon,' dating from about half-a-century before Christ, the Messiah is the son of David who comes, at the time known to God only, to reign over Israel. He is pure from sin; He is Christ the Lord. In strictly Rabbinical documents there are passages which imply not only the pre-existence, but the premundane existence of the Messiah, and which represent Him as elevated above the ordinary conditions of humanity. He is the King sent from heaven, the King whom God will send from the sun, and His is to be a superhuman kingdom of eternal duration.

'From the views expressed in Rabbinical literature,

John i. 49.

Luke i. 32.

See  
Edersheim,  
Vol. I.,  
pp. 171—179.

The Book of  
Enoch.

In 'Oracles,'  
170 B.C.

Rabbinical  
literature.

Vol. I.,  
p. 171.

and, so far as we can gather from the Gospel narratives, from those cherished by the contemporaries of Christ—two inferences seem evident’—Edersheim says: ‘First, the idea of a Divine Personality, and of the union of the two natures in the Messiah, seems to have been foreign to the Jewish auditory of Jesus of Nazareth, and even at first to His disciples. Secondly, they appear to have regarded the Messiah as far above the ordinary, human, royal, prophetic, and even angelic type, to such extent that the boundary line separating it from Divine Personality is of the narrowest, so that when the conviction of the reality of the Messianic manifestation in Jesus burst on their minds this boundary line was easily, almost naturally, overstepped, and those who would have shrunk from framing their belief in such dogmatic form, readily owned and worshipped Him as the Son of God.’

p. 179.

A Divine  
personality  
not taught.

Again Edersheim says—‘It is not contended that, whatever individuals may have expected, the synagogue taught the doctrine of the Divine Personality of the Messiah as held by the Christian Church. On the other hand, the cumulative evidence just presented must leave on the mind at least this conviction, that the Messiah expected was far above the conditions of the most exalted of God’s servants, even His angels; in short, so closely bordering on the Divine, that it was almost impossible to distinguish Him therefrom. In such circumstances, it only needed the personal conviction that He, who taught and wrought as none other, was really the Messiah, to kindle at His word into the adoring confession that He was indeed the Son of the Living God. And once that point reached, the mind, looking back through the teaching of the synagogue, would, with increasing clearness, perceive

that, however ill-understood in the past, this had been all along the sum of the whole Old Testament. Thus we can understand alike the preparedness for, and yet the gradualness of conviction on this point; then, the increasing clearness with which it emerged in the consciousness of His disciples; and, finally, the unhesitating distinctness with which it was put forward in Apostolic teaching as the fundamental article of belief in the Church Catholic.'

In concluding this review of the self-revelation of Jesus Christ as 'the Son of God,' we are struck with the fact that neither the Evangelists nor the Apostles attempt any definition of the relation of Father and Son in the Divine nature. And in their self-restraint we see the wisdom, not of man, but of God. But there was no hesitation on their part, and no consciousness of inconsistency with their idea of the unity of God, in ascribing to their Christ all Divine attributes. Their faith culminated in the exclamation of Thomas, 'My Lord and my God.'

No attempt  
to explain.

## III.—THE MESSIAH.

John i. 49.  
vv. 41—42  
(Rev. Ver.).

iv. 25—26.

Messiah  
from the  
first.

Keim.

‘THOU art the King of Israel,’ Nathanael said to the young Nazarene. ‘We have found the Messiah,’ Andrew said to his brother Simon. And when he brought him to Jesus, Jesus, speaking with authority, said, ‘Thou art Simon, the son of Joanes, thou shalt be called Cephias.’ ‘I know that Messiah cometh,’ said the woman of Samaria. ‘I that speak unto thee am He,’ Jesus rejoined.

Whatever Messiahship implied, either as to the person or the work of Him who should bear the office, was thus ascribed to, and claimed by, Jesus of Nazareth, and that from the beginning of His ministry. So far is it from being true, as we have already shown, that it was only towards the end of His life that what they call His Messianic consciousness became complete. Even Keim acknowledges that Jesus was ‘convinced of His Messianic vocation from His very first public appearance,’ and he avows himself ‘forced decidedly to reject the theories of Strauss and Schenkel, who hold that the Messianic idea was not formed till later on.’ ‘There can be no doubt,’ he says, ‘that from the very beginning He laid claim to the highest authority. In His opening discourses He proclaims His Messiahship in terms more or less distinct; but, apart from these, all the Gospels agree that during the first period of His ministry He bore the title of “Son of Man”; which was confessedly and indubitably indicative of the Messianic dignity.’

‘Let all objectors remember,’ says another German, quoted by Christlieb, ‘that no transitional turning-point in the life of Christ, no breaking forth of His Messianic consciousness, such as the Gospels describe at the beginning of His ministry, can be either pointed out or imagined later on.’ From the day when Andrew said to his brother, ‘We have found the Messiah,’ till the day when Caiaphas adjured Jesus to say whether He was the Christ, there was neither variable-ness nor shadow of turning in His apprehension of Himself and His mission. The author of *Ecce Homo* says truly, ‘No other career ever had so much unity. Men in general take up scheme after scheme, as circumstances suggest one or another, and therefore most biographers are compelled to pass from one subject to another, and to enter into a multitude of minute questions, to divide the life carefully into periods by chronological landmarks accurately determined, to trace the gradual development of character and ripening or change of opinions. But Christ formed one plan and executed it. No important change took place in His mode of thinking, speaking, or acting; at least the evidence before us does not enable us to trace any such change.’ The evidence rather enables us to see that there was no such change. It reveals ‘the admirable certainty and firmness’ of His professions and conduct from the beginning to the end.

No transi-  
tional  
period.

Author of  
*Ecce Homo*.

We have, then, two questions to ask respecting the Messiahship—first, What was the Messiahship according to the sacred books of the Jews? and second, What manner of Messiahship was popularly expected in the time of Jesus Christ? That is, first, the Messiahship

Two  
questions.

of prophecy, and, secondly, the Messiahship of popular expectation.

The  
Messiah of  
prophecy.  
Dan. ix.  
25-27.

THE MESSIAH OF PROPHECY.—The word Messiah occurs for the first and only time in the Book of Daniel. ‘Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself. . . . And He shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week He shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.’ The Hebrew ‘Messiah’ and the Greek ‘Christ’ both mean ‘anointed:’ so that the words in the passage just quoted might be translated in v. 25, ‘the Anointed, the Prince,’ and in v. 26, ‘the Anointed.’ The significance of the passage is to be found not in its retaining the Hebrew form ‘Messiah,’ and regarding it as a proper noun, as ‘Christ’ has been in the New Testament, but in its foretelling the coming at a particular period of an ‘Anointed Prince,’ a Prince anointed of God, who should be cut off, but not for Himself.

The Book of  
Daniel.

There are critics who regard the Book of Daniel, and especially some portions of it, as having been written in an age long after that of Daniel, but on no better ground than their objection to its miraculous narrations, and the supposition that its predictions are too minute and definite to have been written before the events to which they refer. But even if we accepted the theory of these critics, which we do not, it would still be true that the book existed some two



hundred years before Christ. The prediction of Messiah the Prince in the ninth chapter, and the prediction of the kingdom to be set up by the God of Heaven, which should never be destroyed, in the second chapter, were given, even on the most anti-Christian theory, nearly two centuries before the period at which Christians say that they were fulfilled. The Jewish expectation of a Messiah, a Prince, a Kingdom of God and of Heaven, which was rife and fervent when Jesus Christ appeared, may thus be traced AT LEAST to the days ascribed by hostile criticism to the Book of Daniel.

But there are critics of the same school who see clearly that the expectation of a Messiah was not originated by the Book of Daniel, but was of much older date. Keim says: 'In the separation of the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel (B.C. 965), in the decline of Israel, and in the decay of Judah under David's posterity, there sprang up, and from the ninth century, from the times of the prophets Amos and Hosea; and then in the eighth century, in the times of the prophets Isaiah and Micah, there grew continually stronger, the hope that God would raise up once more "the fallen tabernacle of David," that He would plant upon Zion a branch from the stem of Jesse which had been cut down, from the top of the high cedar which had been broken off; that out of Bethlehem, out of the house of David, the King of Israel, there should come forth, adorned with the name of God, and with the mysterious title of the Eternal, a Gatherer together of the people, a Conqueror of the Gentiles, the world's Prince of Peace, the Planter of Knowledge and of Righteousness. At the beginning of the Asiatic captivity, of the end of all hope (B. C. 588), Jeremiah

Jesus of Nazara,  
Vol. I.,  
pp.315-316.

The expectation of  
Messiah  
far older  
than Book  
of Daniel.

Isaiah.

Jeremiah.

Ezekiel.

and Ezekiel persisted in the assertion that in the seed of David, in the righteous branch, the redemption of the nation was at hand. The long exile, the weakness of the colony that returned to the land of their fathers under the Persian King Cyrus (B. C. 536), the decayed condition of the family of David, which with difficulty asserted itself in Jerubbaal, weakened faith in the old royal house, but not faith in the future of Israel. 'Faith in the house of David disappears in Malachi, the last prophet, but the Lord Himself will come to execute judgment, to inhabit His temple, to establish His covenant and Kingdom, and will have as His forerunner, the Heavenly Elijah, the man of incomparable power, an establisher of peace, a preparer of Israel for the coming of the Great King.'

We should digress too far were we to attempt to expound the prophecies of the Messiah which, Keim thus admits, are to be found throughout a period of nearly a thousand years. In the barest outline of them we shall find apparently irreconcilable opposites. 'The Messiah was to be God and man, exalted and made low, master and servant, priest and victim; prince and subject; involved in death and yet victor over death; rich and poor; a king, a conqueror, glorious, and a man of griefs, exposed to infirmities unknown, in a state of abjection and humiliation.'

See the  
Author's  
Handbook  
of Christian  
Evidences,  
pp. 184—195.

Isa. ix. 6.  
Micah v. 2.  
Zech. xiii. 7.  
Divine.

(a) The Messiah was to be *God and Man*. This was most expressly foretold in Isaiah, but likewise in Micah, Zechariah and Malachi.

Isa. liii.  
Dan. ix. 26.  
A sufferer.

(b) The Messiah was to be a *great sufferer, even unto death*, and His sufferings were to be the means of a spiritual salvation to the world.

(c) The Messiah was to be a *Great King and Conqueror*, but very unlike other kings in the means and ends of His reign.

Isa. xi. 1-5.  
Zech. ix. 9.  
A King.

(d) The Messiah was to be a *Priest* as well as a king. This is implied in prophecies already quoted, and is expressly asserted in Zechariah.

Isa. liii.  
Dan. ix.  
Zech. vi.  
12-13.  
See Ps. cx.

(e) The Messiah was to be a *great Prophet*, and to introduce a dispensation in which the Gentiles were to enjoy equal privileges and light with the Jews.

Isa. ii. 2.  
Jer. xxxi.  
31-34.

Priest and prophet.

Such was the Messiah of prophecy.

Now what was the MESSIAH OF POPULAR EXPECTATION in the time of Jesus Christ? As far as possible, every reader of the Gospels will answer—from the Messiah of Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, and Malachi—‘The popular degradation of the doctrine (of the Messiah) may be traced to the later political circumstances of the Jews, acting upon the secular and materialised element in the Jewish character. . . .

The Messiah of popular expectation.

As in succession they served the Persian monarchs, the Syrian Greeks, the Idumæan king, and the Roman magistrate, the Jewish people cast an eye more and more wistfully to the political hopes which might be extracted from their ancient and accepted Messianic belief. They learned to pass more and more lightly over the prophetic pictures of a Messiah robed in moral majesty, of a Messiah relieving the woes of the whole human family, of a Messiah suffering torture and shame in the cause of truth. They dwelt more and more eagerly upon the pictures of His world-wide conquest and imperial sway, and they construed those promises of coming triumph in the most earthly and secular sense; they looked for a Jewish Alexander or a Jewish Cæsar. . . . It is plain how deeply when

the Lord appeared the hope of a deliverer had sunk into the heart of peasant and townsman; yet it is equally plain how earthly was the taint which had passed over the popular apprehension of this glorious hope, since its first full proclamation in the days of the prophets. Doubtless there were saints like the aged Simeon, whose eyes longed sore for the Divine Christ foretold in the great age of Hebrew prophecy. But, generally speaking, the piety of the enslaved Jew had become little else than a wrong-headed patriotism. His religious expectations had been taken possession of by his civic passions, and were liable at any moment to be placed at the service of a purely political agitation.'

Liddon's  
Bampton  
Lectures—  
Lecture II.

Renan.

Hence it was that, in the language of Renan, Galilee was at this time 'an immense furnace wherein the most diverse elements were seething.' 'Continual seditions, excited by the zealots of Mosaism, did not cease, in fact, to agitate Jerusalem during all this time. The death of the seditious was certain; but death, when the integrity of the law was in question, was sought with avidity. To overturn the Roman eagle, to destroy the works of art raised by the Herods, in which the Mosaic regulations were not always respected, to rise up against the votive escutcheons put up by the procurators, the inscriptions of which appeared tainted with idolatry—were perpetual temptation to fanatics, who had reached that degree of exultation which removes all care for life.'

The Sicarii.

From this spirit arose the 'Zelotes,' or 'Sicarii,' pious assassins, who imposed on themselves the task of killing whoever in their estimation compromised the honour of the law of Moses. And what manner of Messiah might spring from this spirit may easily be

divined. At the best he would be a man after the image of the noble-hearted son of Matthatias. In his days there was a magnificent burst of Jewish patriotism. 'How could Messiah assume any other form than that of Judas Maccabæus to a people possessed by the noblest of human passions? The pathetic symbols of Isaiah and Jeremiah paled before the image of the young warrior, crushing the might of Antiochus, and bathing the steps of the sanctuary with the blood of the sacrilegious. This vision of the warrior-archangel was thenceforward ever to float before the eyes of the Jews.' The Jews in their dispersion were bound together by their reverence for their common centre, Jerusalem, and by their hope of restoration to their own land. Both Eastern and Western Judaism cherished this hope. Wherever scattered, the Jews expected that the coming of the Messiah would be the signal of their return to Palestine. Indeed, every devout Jew prayed day by day, Edersheim says, 'Proclaim by Thy loud trumpet our deliverance, and raise up a banner to gather our dispersed, and gather us together from the four ends of the earth.' Heaven and earth might be destroyed, but not Israel; and their final deliverance would far outstrip in marvellousness that from Egypt. The wind would blow to bring together the dispersed; nay, if there were a single Israelite in the land, however distant, he would be restored. With every honour would the nations bring them back. The patriarchs and all the just would rise to share in the joys of the new possession of their land; new hymns as well as the old ones would rise to the praise of God. Nay, the bounds of the land would be extended far beyond what they had ever been, and made as wide as originally promised to Abraham. Nor would that

De Pres-  
sense—  
'Jesus  
Christ,'  
p. 380.

The disper-  
sion.

See The  
Life and  
Times of the  
Messiah,  
Vol. I.,  
ch. vi.

Sibylline  
poem.

possession ever be taken from them, nor those joys ever be succeeded by sorrows. A Hebrew Sibylline poem, which was composed, probably, in Alexandria about B.C. 115, echoes these aspirations and hopes of the Jews. 'From the land of the Sun God will send forth a King who shall put an end to war in the whole earth, by destroying the wicked and bringing the righteous into His covenant.' 'Evidently this is a warrior king, who is to establish universal peace by his conquering sword. A second Maccabæus shall achieve the work commenced by the first. The happiness of mankind when it shall have been brought (thanks to the Jews) under his laws is represented in lively imagery. The people of the great God will roll in gold and silver, will be clothed in purple, and earth and seas will pour their treasures at their feet.'

The Book of  
Jubilees.

In a book of later date (the Book of Jubilees) we are told that, though for its wickedness Israel had been scattered, God would gather them all from the midst of the heathen, build among them His Sanctuary, and dwell with them. That Sanctuary was to 'be for ever and ever, and God would appear to the eye of every one, and every one acknowledge that He was the God of Israel, and the Father of all the children of Jacob, and King upon Mount Zion from everlasting to everlasting. And Zion and Jerusalem shall be called holy.' 'When listening to this language of, perhaps, a contemporary of Jesus, we can in some measure understand the popular indignation which such a charge would call forth as that the Man of Nazareth had proposed to destroy the Temple, or that He thought meanly of the children of Jacob.'

Eilersheim,  
Vol. I., p. 80.

Barchoe-  
bas.

A hundred years after Christ, we find the Jewish spirit culminating in the life of Barchochebas.

Announcing himself as the long-expected Christ, he called on all the descendants of Abraham to assert the hope of Israel. He called himself 'Son of the Star,' because prophecy had said, 'There shall come a Star out of Jacob.' He collected a formidable army, and compelled the Romans to evacuate Jerusalem, where he was proclaimed king, and caused coins to be struck with his name. The war spread through all the country of Palestine; and fifty towns, besides many villages and hamlets, came into the possession of the Jews. This military Messiah called on the followers of Jesus to renounce their faith, and condemned to death those who would not. For two years he resisted the power of the Emperor Hadrian, but was at last overpowered, and perished with hundreds of thousands of those who had hailed him as their king, and who now, in their bitter disappointment, called him 'Son of a Lie.' In the character and acts of this Simon Barchochebas we see, as in a mirror, very clearly, the sentiments and hopes which filled the nation of Israel when Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed Himself the Messiah. And it needs no argument to prove that the spirit which produced the Messiahship of Barchochebas, could not have produced the Messiahship assumed by Jesus.

Numb. xxiv.  
17.

Success.

Defeat.

There are two conclusions that may now be maintained—first, that Jesus was not a Messiah after the type of popular expectation; and secondly, that His professions respecting Himself correspond with the Messiah of prophecy.

Two  
conclusions.

The contrariety between the then Jewish conception of the Messiahship and the actual Messiahship claimed by Jesus, is patent to all. 'Jesus Christ,' says Mr.

M. Arnold—*Ecce Homo.*

Matthew Arnold, 'was undoubtedly the very last sort of Messiah whom the Jews expected.' 'Professing to be the king they expected,' says the author of *Ecce Homo*, 'He did none of the things which they expected the king to do.' 'They expected,' says the same author, 'to see once more a warrior king, judging in the gate of Jerusalem, or surrounded by his mighty men, or carrying his victorious arms into the neighbouring countries, or receiving submissive embassies from Rome and Seleucia, and in the meantime holding awful communication with Jehovah, administering His law, and singing His praise. It was as impossible for them to conceive the true Christ, to imagine what He would do, or how He would do it, as it was impossible for them to fill His place.'

But He did nevertheless claim to be their King. 'During His whole public life,' says *Ecce Homo*, 'He is distinguished from the other prominent characters of Jewish history by His unbounded personal pretensions, He calls Himself habitually King and Master. He claims expressly the character of that Divine Messiah for which the ancient prophets had directed the nation to look.' And, as this author remarks, the royalty which He claims was not a figure of speech which the Jews mistakenly interpreted literally. '*We do not find in history whole nations misled, bloody catastrophes and revolutions produced by verbal mistakes which could be explained in a moment.*' A wise man might compare his own authority to that of a king, but 'if he saw that his words were so grossly misapprehended that he was in danger of involving himself and others in political difficulties, he would certainly withdraw or explain the metaphor. But it is evident that Christ clung firmly to the title, and

A true  
royalty.



attached great importance to it.' The first charge on which His enemies demanded sentence of death against Him, was not His use of a metaphor, but His assertion of a reality; and in answer to Pilate He persisted in the assertion, and used terms which, without lowering the dignity of His Kingship, represented it in an aspect which neither Pilate nor His accusers could appreciate.

These accusers charged Him with being a dangerous character; their inward complaint against Him was that He was not dangerous. Had His kingdom been of this world, they would not have delivered Him up to the Romans. They could not forgive Him for claiming royalty and at the same time rejecting the use of physical force. Had He been backed by a military force and favoured by success, His royal pretensions would have been enthusiastically received. 'A King who neither had nor cared to have a court or an army; a King who could not enforce a command; a King who preached and lectured like a scribe, yet in His weakness and insignificance could not forget His dignity, had His royal title often in His mouth, and lectured with an authority that no scribe assumed—these violent contrasts, this disappointment of their theories, this homely parody of their hopes, inspired them with an irritation, and at last a malignant disgust, which it is not hard to understand.'

This contrariety between the professions of Jesus and the popular hope, was manifest from the beginning. His herald did not open his campaign by the proclamation, 'To your tents, O Israel, and choose you captains to lead you forth to battle;' but by the proclamation, 'Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' He did not flatter the children of

His kingdom not of this world.

*Ecce Homo,*  
ch. iii.

The King's!  
herald.

Abraham as the favoured of heaven, and the destined lords of the world, but said in the language of severe and honest truth, 'Think not to say within yourselves we have Abraham to our Father; for I say unto you, God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'

Jesus Christ Himself addressed the people in the same strain. 'Repent ye,' he said, in the words of His forerunner, 'for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' And in the Sermon on the Mount we have what may be regarded as His manifesto to the nation. This great utterance contains not a word about swords and arms and battles—the ascendancy of Judaism and the conquest of Rome. But, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven; 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth'; and many precepts and promises of which these beatitudes are the keynote. And all this in Galilee, the recent scene of the insurrection headed by Judas the Gaulonite, whom Renan calls 'the head of a Galilean sect, deeply imbued with the Messianic idea, and became a political movement'—in Galilee, which in the words of the same author, was as 'a seething furnace.' 'Jesus, as soon as He began to think,' Renan says, 'entered into the burning atmosphere' of political and warlike Messianic ideas.' But we have only to listen to His words in the Sermon on the Mount to perceive that the 'atmosphere' which surrounded Him did not 'burn' its 'ideas' into His soul. His ideas were the very opposite of those which filled the atmosphere around Him. There was the utmost repugnancy between them. And He could see from

The Sermon  
on the  
Mount.

Political  
atmosphere  
of Galilee.

the beginning, as He saw at the end, of His ministry, that instead of aiding Him to ascend His throne, the fiery aspirations of His countrymen would resist His claims, and hasten the day when there would not be one stone left upon another, of city or temple, that should not be thrown down.

How came it to pass, we ask with wonder, that Jesus of Nazareth was able to separate Himself so absolutely from His age and nation? His contemporaries spoke of Him as one who had never learned, who had never been in any school of learning. And modern sceptics confess that 'He was ignorant of the strange scholasticism which was taught at Jerusalem.' While 'neither directly nor indirectly did any element of Greek culture reach Him. *He knew nothing beyond Judaism.*' And yet of that Judaism, beyond which it is said He knew nothing else, He is absolutely free. The elements which were most intense in the region in which He was brought up produced no effect upon Him. There must have been something in Himself which repelled them, something with which they would not coalesce, and which was stronger than they.

The solution of this problem is to be found in the fact that while He was not the Messiah of popular expectation, *He was, and knew Himself to be, the Messiah of prophecy.* He was conscious of the apparent contraries of prophetic utterance respecting the person of the Christ, and which found their reconciliation in Him who was both Son of God and Son of man. To the Pharisees He said, 'What think ye of the Christ? Whose Son is He?' They say unto Him, 'The Son of David.' He saith unto them, 'How then doth

John vii. 15.

See Matt.  
xiii. 54-55.

Renan.

The  
Author's  
Hand-  
book, p. 190.Isa. ix. 6.  
Zech. xiii. 7.Matt. xxii.  
42-45.

David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool ? If David then call Him Lord, how is He then his son ?

The conditions of the Messiahship known.

Luke xxiv.  
26, 46-47.  
(Rev. Ver.)

The apparent contraries in prophecy respecting *the condition* of the Christ, were likewise present to the mind of Jesus, and, He intimated, reconciled in Him. 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken ! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory ? Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.' There are those who cannot see the prophetic glory fulfilled in the spiritual conquests and reign of Jesus Christ. But even they must confess that Jesus Christ did Himself regard the most discordant attributes and fortunes of the Christ, as they appeared in prophecy, as being reconciled and harmonised in Him, that He taught His disciples that it was so, and that this was ever after their contention with their Jewish brethren.

How did Jesus know Himself Messiah ?

On the assumption, then, that the idea of the Messiahship as it appears in Christ corresponds with the predictions which the nation, although grossly misapprehending their scope, held to be Divine, how came it to pass that the Nazarene imagined that those predictions referred to Him and should find fulfilment in His history ? We can imagine the possibility of a devout student of Isaiah and Daniel, taught of God, like Simeon, seeing in ancient promise a very different Christ than that which his contemporaries expected, and a very different salvation.

We can imagine him becoming more entirely free from the worldly hopes of his countrymen than did even Peter and James and John while their Master was still with them on earth. But the phenomenon before us is not that of a devout man so enlightened, in spite of all the perverting influences that surrounded him, as to discern the purely spiritual, and therefore more glorious, character of the coming Christ and His mission, but that of a man thus enlightened who believes Himself to be the coming Christ and Saviour, who in the Nazarene synagogue reads one of the most illustrious prophecies of Isaiah, and says, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears;' and who steps forth from His Nazarene home, and stands up in temple and market-place, before the learned doctors of the time, and amidst the peasantry of His nation, and addresses them with all the authority of a Royal and Divine Christ. How shall we explain it? Insanity or enthusiasm might drive a man into any amount of extravagance or folly, but in such a case as this 'the folly would soon appear unto all men.' If ever man was sane, and free from all disturbing or perverting influences, it was Jesus Christ. His life, as unbelievers have confessed, was more like the life of a God than the life of a man; His wisdom and purity were more Divine than human. How then shall we account for the assumption of a Messiahship which disappointed His people, *but which combined in a way which no one understood but Himself, the most mysterious and seemingly contradictory representations of their Holy Books?* And how account for that three years' ministry of teaching and beneficence (to say nothing of His miracles) which was brought to a close only by a sentence, the injus-

Insanity or  
enthusiasm.

Real  
fulfilment.

tice of which was acknowledged by the judge who pronounced it—a catastrophe which was itself included in the prophetic foreshadowing of the Messiah's history, at least as interpreted by Jesus and His followers? How account for all this? There is no explanation but that which regards the alleged fulfilment of the prophecy, and the avowal of Jesus that He was the Christ and the Son of God, all as genuine and true.

Messiah and  
miracles.

There remains a question of no small importance, Did Jesus, claiming to be the Messiah, profess to work miracles? Antecedent to this come two questions—(1) Did prophecy foretell the working of miracles by the Messiah? and (2), Did the Jews in the time of Christ expect their Messiah to work miracles?

Isa. xxxv.  
5—7.

In answer to the first of these questions we cannot quote Old Testament texts which *explicitly* ascribe miracles to the Coming One. The words of Isaiah—‘He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing,’ did find their literal counterpart in the works of Christ. But we cannot safely rest upon them as a literal prediction of these works. The connection in which they stand shows that they were a poetic description of blessing and joy, primarily to be realised in the return of the Jewish exiles from their captivity; and, we may hold, to be further realised in that great Redemption of which other redemptions were the earnest and pledge. The lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing, ‘for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.’

But without explicit prediction, there was enough in prophecy to excite and justify the expectation of 'mighty works.' The Messiah was to be a prophet like unto Moses, whose 'mighty works' were recorded in the history of the nation, and inspired their songs. He was to be greater than Elijah, whose 'mighty works' almost transcended those of Moses himself, the antitype of Elijah being only His forerunner. As admitted by Keim, whose words have been already quoted, He was to 'come forth, adorned with the name of God, and with the mysterious title of the Eternal, a conqueror of the Gentiles, the world's prince of peace, the planter of knowledge and righteousness.' Could it need specific prophecy to inform the world that wonders should attend the steps of this mysterious Person? In the oft-repeated words of Dr. Thomas Arnold, miracles were 'the natural accompaniments of His Incarnation — accompaniments, the absence of which would have been far more wonderful than their presence.'

As to the question whether the Jews of Christ's age expected their Messiah to work miracles, we have the means of answer in the Gospels themselves. As the result of one of His controversies with the men of Jerusalem in the Temple we read, 'Many of the people believed on Him, and said, When the Christ shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?' Expecting 'signs,' the people almost instinctively associated the idea of Messiahship with the works which Jesus wrought. When He fed five thousand men with five barley loaves and two fishes, the people said, 'This is of a truth the Prophet that cometh into the world.' And so believing, they would have come and taken Him by force to make

Expecta-  
tion of  
mighty  
works.

John vii. 31.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John vi. 14.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John vi.  
29—30.

Him their King. On the following day, when Jesus said, 'This is the work of God that ye believe in Him whom He hath sent,' the Jews said, 'What sign showest thou then, that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work?' The repeated demand for a 'sign' of His Messiahship grew out of the expectation of the people, that when the Messiah came He would show signs and wonders.

Renan puts the matter thus: 'Two means of proof—miracles and the accomplishment of prophecies—could alone, in the opinion of the contemporaries of Jesus, establish a supernatural mission. Jesus, and especially His disciples, employed these two processes of demonstration in perfect faith. For a long time Jesus had been convinced that the prophets had written only in reference to Him. As to miracles, they were regarded at this period as the indisputable mark of the Divine, and as the sign of the prophetic vocation. The legends of Elijah and Elisha were full of them. It was commonly believed that the Messiah would perform many.'

Did Jesus  
work  
miracles?

These things being so—the Jews expecting Messianic miracles—did Jesus, avowing Himself the Messiah, work miracles or profess to work them?

John v. 36.

It is often carelessly assumed that Jesus scouted the demand of the people for 'signs' and would not work them. But the fact is that He recognised the right of the people to miraculous evidence, *but not their right to prescribe of what kind it should be, and to demand signs over and above and beyond those which He gave them.* 'I have greater witness than that of John,' He said, 'for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent



Me.' When John had heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent by his disciples, and said unto Him, 'Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?' And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Go your way and tell John the things ye do see and hear: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them.' Towards the end of His ministry Jesus said, 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated Me and My Father.'

Matt. xi.  
2-5.  
(Rev. Ver.)

John xv. 24.

While Jesus professed to work miracles, and miracles which left the people without excuse, He would not work miracles at the bidding of those who asked for them, especially such miracles as they desired. When certain of the Scribes and Pharisees said, 'Master, we would see a sign from Thee;' and when certain Pharisees and Sadducees united to tempt Him, demanding 'a sign from heaven,' He reproached those who made the demand, saying, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.' Even when He met the legitimate desire for evidence, Jesus complained that the people, and even His disciples, did not appreciate as they ought, other signs than physical miracles. When asked by a nobleman, or royal officer, of Capernaum, to come down and heal his son, He exclaimed, 'Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.' He had just come from Samaria, where many believed that He was indeed the Saviour of the world, without witnessing any miracle, simply through the 'word' which He had preached to

Not at  
bidding of  
the people.

Matt. xii. 38.  
xvi. 1.

John iv. 48.

iv. 41-42.

See also  
xiv. 8-11.

xx. 29

Evidence  
enough.

John xx.  
30-31.

Logical  
dilemma of  
unbelievers.

them during His two days' stay among them. And He no sooner sets His feet on Israelitish soil than He is solicited to work a miracle! The reflection suggested by it was the result of Christ's former experience in Galilee, and shows how deeply He felt the spiritual obtuseness of the people of the region. When He condescended to Thomas's demand to '*see*' for himself, Jesus said, 'Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed.'

But all this is consistent with the fact that Jesus did work miracles to prove Himself to be the Messiah. It was because he wrought such miracles in abundance that He declined to work them, as it were, to order. If those who desired them were honestly seeking to know the truth, they had evidence more than enough to satisfy them. In immediate connection with the words addressed to Thomas, the fourth Gospel says: 'Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.'

Unbelievers find themselves in a logical dilemma from which there is no escape, in relation to the miracles of the Messiah. Thus, (*a*) the Messiah must work miracles, to satisfy popular and universal expectation; (*b*) Jesus did not work miracles; (*c*) yet Jesus did believe in His own Messiahship (for, as Strauss admits, 'in such a person every inch must have been a conviction'); and (*d*) His disciples, who shared the general expectation, believed in His Messiahship, although, it is alleged, they saw nothing miraculous in His works! What explanation can be

given of this enigma? It is this, after the first shock of doubt caused by the death of Jesus, the faith of the disciples in His Messiahship revived, and invented, or imagined, miracles, *for itself to rest on!* The miracles were not the cause of the faith, but the faith was the cause of the miracles; and yet the theory assumes the necessity of the miracles in order to the faith. This is worse than reasoning in a circle; it turns history into chaos. And even if it be all admitted, it leaves the faith of Jesus in His own Messiahship unexplained and unaccounted for.

The Messiahship of Jesus, we have seen, was not the Messiahship of popular expectation, but was the Messiahship of prophecy. This fact finds further illustration in the character of His miracles. These were not the works or signs generally expected; they were of a different and higher character, and worthy of Him whose coming prophets had foretold. Of the Rabbinism of the days immediately preceding the coming of Christ, Edersheim says, 'The miraculous merges into the ridiculous, and even the revolting. Miraculous cures, miraculous supplies, miraculous help, all for the glory of great Rabbis, who by a look or word can kill, and restore to life. At their bidding the eyes of a rival fall out and are again inserted.' When searching for the tomb of a Rabbi, one found it was miraculously removed from his sight, as being too sacred for ordinary eyes. Rabbah, when about to be arrested, caused the face of the messenger to be turned to his back and again restored it. Such examples justify the words of Edersheim: 'Between the old and the new, it may be fearlessly asserted, that as regards their substance and spirit, there is not a

The character of His miracles.

Vol. I.,  
p. 107.

Rabbinical miracles.

difference, but a total divergence, of fundamental principle between Rabbinish and the New Testament, so that comparison between them is not possible. Here there is absolute contrariety.'

It is with a sense of unspeakable relief that one turns from the miraculous stories told of and by Jewish Rabbis, and from the sort of miracles which the wondering curiosity of the Jews expected, to the Gospel records. 'It is not a little remarkable,' says Dean Trench, 'rather it is profoundly characteristic of the miracles of the New Testament, as indeed Origen noted long ago, that this name *wonders* is never applied to them but in connection with some other name. They are continually signs *and* wonders, or signs alone, or powers alone, but never wonders alone.'

'A prodigy is only a manifestation of power, an astonishing fact, which arrests the attention, and elicits admiration and amazement quite apart from its moral character. Clearly it has no religious value. . . . The greatest displays of power would not truly reveal God.' When Jesus said, 'The works that I do bear witness of Me,' He appealed not merely to the Divine power by which they were wrought, but to the character of the works themselves. Each particular miracle was a revelation of Himself and of the redeeming purpose of His appearing on earth, 'a reflex of His moral perfection, a sensible expression of His character' as the Saviour of men. That he should have declined to work mere prodigies, what the people called 'signs from heaven,' is only a further proof that He was what He claimed to be.

From all this we may draw these conclusions: 1. If the miracles of Jesus had been unreal, if the professed working of them had been in any sense a mere con-

Dean  
Trench.

De  
Pressens.

A prodigy  
has no  
religious  
value.

Conclusions

If unreal.

cession to popular expectation, they would have been of a very different order from what they were. 2. Even if Jesus had wrought, for popular satisfaction, the sort of wonders which the people craved, these wonders would not have secured general faith in Him as the Messiah—*He being Himself such as He was*. He was Himself the stumbling-block, not the absence of miracles. The Pharisees and Sadducees would not on any terms have such a King to reign over them. Their ideal of the Messiah, as we have seen, was entirely different. They had no sympathy with the pure character of Jesus, and the spiritual salvation which He said He was born to accomplish; and, not won, but repelled, by these, neither would they be persuaded, in their carnality and their earthliness of mind, although He had filled earth and sky with wonders of power. 3. The faith of those who did receive Him as the Christ of God was justified not only by His character, and by the ‘words’ in which they found ‘eternal life,’ but even by the test which the age applied to any claimant to the Messiahship—the having power to work miracles. This was far from being the only ground on which they believed in Him, nor was it in most instances the first—but this essential ground of an abiding faith in His Messiahship was not wanting.

If for  
popular  
satisfaction

John vi. 68.

As to the work of the Messiah in the world, we have only to recall *what He was to be*: a King, a Priest, a Prophet. He came to establish a kingdom of God in a world which had rebelled against God. And in order to do this He was to act the part of a priest, in making atonement for the sins of the world; and the part of a prophet, in revealing God and teaching men.

These titles—Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah—are not mere synonyms. Each of them has its own significance and reveals special attributes of the One Lord. ‘Son of Man’ asserts mainly His proper humanity, humanity which, in view of His pre-existing glory, was a humiliation; but which, in view of His relation to the race, was special and honourable. ‘Son of God,’ when so called by the angel in announcing His birth, could not have been understood by Mary in the highest sense which it afterwards bore; but as used by His disciples, and sanctioned by Himself on solemn occasions, it exposed Him to the charge of blasphemy, as it was understood to invoke a claim of equality with God. ‘Messiah’ was an official title; the office to which it belonged, and the work which prophecy ascribed to that office, being such that He who held the office and performed the work, could not be other or less than Son of Man and Son of God.

PART THIRD.

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CORROBORATIONS: PROPHETIC  
AND HISTORIC.





# CORROBORATIONS: PROPHETIC AND HISTORIC.

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## FIRST — P R O P H E T I C.

IF we accept the Gospel version of the Person and Mission of Jesus Christ, we find it easy to believe, yea, it seems as if we must believe, that mankind received pre-intimation of an event which was destined to affect the world so materially, and which the record represents as having materially affected mankind even before its occurrence. Such pre-intimation we do find in the Old Testament Scriptures, which we honour when we speak of them as a grand preface to the New. Chief among these is the foretelling of Him who, in one of the later books of the Old Testament, was called the Messiah, whose predicted character and office we have already expounded.

There is surely something marvellous in the fact that for ages, many ages we may say, the Jewish nation looked and hoped for some mighty prince who, whatever else he might be or do, should be their glory, and should exalt them above the other nations of the earth. It is a phenomenon which has no parallel in the history of other nations. At a period which, if we do not accept the earlier books of the Bible as genuine history, is so remote as to be lost in primeval mist, the Jewish race set its heart and hope

Pre-intima-  
tions.

Old Testa-  
ment a  
grand pre-  
face to New  
Testament.

Marvel of  
Jewish  
hope.

The  
Author's  
Handbook.  
Part II,  
ch. iv.

on a great future, which was to be realised in the birth and life of one of its own sons. The land might be desolated, the people might be scattered among all nations, and despair might ask, 'Can these dry bones live again?' But nothing could crush out of the heart of this race the hope of a Mighty Potentate who should raise it to a higher honour, and a wider dominion, than it possessed in the glorious reigns of David and Solomon. There was, it is true, a certain degree of mystery about the Personality of the Coming One, and prophets in successive ages described Him in language that could scarcely be understood because it ascribed to Him attributes and prerogatives that were more than human. But His coming was to their minds not so much a probability as a certainty. And never more so than in the age in which Jesus of Nazareth was born.

This we say is a most singular phenomenon. We search history and tradition in vain for anything to compare with it. Assyria perishes, Babylon perishes, the republics of Greece perish, the empires of Macedon and Persia and Rome perish. But they perish without hope. They have no traditional prophecy of a resurrection. No seer arises in the hour of their destruction to bid them be of good cheer, for they shall live again. The grave closes over them, and it needs no seal to secure that its prey shall not be delivered.

See this  
argument  
developed  
regarding  
the Hebrew  
Monothe-  
ism in the  
Author's  
Handbook,  
Part III.,  
ch. ii.

Whence the difference? 'Race' explains nothing. There were greater and mightier Semitic races than the Hebrew. The historical problem remains, whence the difference? The Jew gives us his own explanation, and, in brief, it is this—that he received the hope

which was transmitted from age to age, and to which he has clung amid the ruins of his State and Temple as confidently as he did in the hour of his greatest power, from God Himself. It was not the fruit of his own imagination. There were no depths in his own heart deep enough to produce it. It came from heaven. And not only so, but his nation was founded upon it. The God who separated his father Abraham from his kindred in the east, said to him, 'In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.' This promise became more specific afterwards, and was the very basis of the Hebrew charter. No selfishness on the part of Abraham's children, no corruption, no idolatry could undo the Divine purpose. No national overthrow, nor any number of overthrows, could prevent its accomplishment. Had the preservation of the promise, and the permanence of the Jewish faith in it, been contingent on the people themselves, they must soon have perished. But what was Divinely given was Divinely preserved, and, through the ministrations of prophets in successive ages, it became at last a part of the national thought and sentiment. This is the explanation which the Jewish books give of the grand distinctive hope of the Jewish people, and the manner of its growth into the mighty spiritual power that it was in them in the time of their subjection to Rome. And why should it be thought a thing incredible? Why should it be reckoned among the legends of mankind, or called 'a gigantic dream haunting the Jewish people for centuries?' The phenomenon is one of the most notable facts in the history of the world, and no other fact can be named which has had so potent an influence, and that for good, on the history of the world. There must be some

Whence the  
Jewish  
hope?

rational explanation of it. It cannot have sprung out of the earth; it cannot have emerged unconsciously from the clouds; it cannot have been born of superstition or imposture; how then shall we explain it? It only remains that we accept what we may call its own version of its origin. And this cannot be accounted irrational, unless it be irrational to believe that the Great Ruler of mankind should concern Himself with the government and instruction of His children.

Bearing  
on the  
personal  
claims of  
Jesus.

All this has an important bearing on the personal claims asserted by Jesus of Nazareth. The predictions which had for ages announced a world's Messiah, the preparations which had been made for His coming, the hopes which had sustained the hearts of God's servants through long periods of disorder and sin, the great blessings which were to accrue to mankind through Him, all pointed to a greater than a mere man could be. It was not in another Moses that all the families of the earth were to be blessed; it was not by another David that the enemies of God in all lands were to be subdued; it was not by another Solomon that the dominion of peace was to be exercised from sea to sea. The image of a greater than Moses and David and Solomon shone through prophetic words and signs: 'Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from hence-

One greater  
than the  
greatest.

Isaiah ix.  
c—7.

forth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.' Verily, eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man, the great things which God had purposed on behalf of the objects of His compassionate love. The words of Isaiah were written more than a thousand years after the days of Abraham, and seven hundred years before the days of Christ. They could not fail to provoke the question, Of whom speaketh the prophet these things? They ascribed to their subject, whoever he might be, attributes which seemed mutually irreconcilable, and an eternity of reign which seemed impossible. But 'the zeal of Jehovah of Hosts' was pledged to accomplish the impossibility and to reconcile the irreconcilable. How far the most devout and enlightened men of old could understand the prophets' words we know not. But *we* see in them a concentration of all the glorious things foretold through many ages, of Him in whom the families of the earth were to be blessed, and who, in words still more ancient, was to bruise the head of the serpent, or, in New Testament language, to destroy the works of the devil. *A Messiah who should come short of combining in Himself the great contrasts of the 'child-born' and the 'Mighty God,' would come short of what was explicitly foretold by Isaiah, and implicitly foretold by many others; and would come short of capacity to effect for the world those exceeding great benefits for which four thousand years were not too long a preparation.*

That Jesus of Nazareth made avowals concerning Himself which rose to the full measure of all that Isaiah had foretold, has been clearly shown in our review of His words. Before Abraham's days He had been. The Father and He were one. His kingdom was

not of this world, and therefore it was one of which there should be 'no end.' That the people objected, we do not wonder. But their objections only confirm the natural interpretation of His words. They objected because, as He said to them, they knew neither Him nor His Father. He understood what His contemporaries did not understand, the exceeding riches of the grace of the promise which had run like a divine thread, often lost sight of but still there, through four millenniums of man's history: but it was not merely through the power of a clearer spiritual vision, still less through the force of a merely human genius: it was because He was Himself the object of that promise, and had come to unveil the mystery hidden from ages. The Messiahship, not as it was apprehended by a worldly-minded generation, but as it was in the divine purpose prophetically revealed, and the avowals of Jesus of Nazareth concerning Himself thus throw, the one on the other, a light which illumines much that would otherwise be dark, and which should leave us in no doubt that He was what He declared Himself in a most solemn hour, and in a most solemn manner, to be—the Son of God and the King of Israel.

Rev. Ver.  
Matt. xxvi.  
63—64.  
Mark. xiv.  
61—62.  
Luke xxii.  
67—70.

Old Testament prophecy is a fact, explain it how we will. It is embodied or embedded in historic records extending over many centuries. It is itself a mystery, and is associated with mysterious spiritual appearances, and with mysterious declarations on the part of speakers who seemed not to belong to our mortal race. Of all this we must find some rational explanation, and if we find a key that will explain all, the presumption at least will be that we have found the truth in the key. Now such a key is furnished, in a very

concise and significant form, in the Revised version of an important text in one of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Let it be understood, however, that I do not appeal to this text as authoritatively determining the question, but only as suggesting to us a means of explaining much that is mysterious in the Old Testament. And if the explanation be sufficient, we shall find in it, in the absence of any other equally rational explanation, a prophetic corroboration of the personal claims of Jesus Christ.

The text in which we used to read 'God was manifest in the flesh,' is now rendered thus: 'Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness. He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory.' The Revisers judged, rightly or wrongly, that the Apostle did not write the word '*θεος*' (God), and that this word got into the text probably through some copyist, who mistook the Greek (*ος*) of the relative 'who' for the contracted form of the Greek for 'God.' Biblical students have long been familiar with the critical controversy on the subject—whether the original represented 'God' or 'which' or 'who.' The Revisers prefer the last. But whichever be adopted, it is evident that by 'the mystery of godliness' the Apostle meant a *person*. This would be certain even if, instead of 'He who,' we should say, as some, though on insufficient grounds, have preferred, 'which.' 'The mystery of godliness . . . was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, received up in glory.' We could not say this of a doctrine or an abstraction. It could be said only of a person.

And we can have no difficulty in identifying the

I. Tim. iii.  
16.

See Pye  
Smith's  
Scrip. Tes.  
Vol. II.,  
p. 384.

person to whom Paul refers. In writing to the Philippians he speaks of Christ as having been 'in the form of God,' but emptying himself, 'taking the form of a servant.' And writing to the Corinthians, he says, that though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor. The fact which is explicitly asserted in these and other passages, the pre-existence of Jesus Christ, implicitly underlies all Paul's teaching respecting Him. So that there can be no doubt that by 'Him who was manifested in the flesh,' the Apostle means Jesus Christ. And there can be no reason why He was not named in the text, but that it was not necessary to name Him. To Timothy the reference was as intelligible as if the name was inserted.

Now what does Paul mean by calling Jesus, 'who was manifested in the flesh and preached among the nations,' '*the mystery of godliness*'? The meaning commonly attached to the old translation fails us here. When we read, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh,' we understood the Apostle to say that the incarnation of God in the person of Christ was a great mystery, in the popular acceptance of the term, a very mysterious thing, something beyond our comprehension. And this is most true. But this is not the idea of the new translation, and we must find Paul's thought in his own use of the word 'mystery.'

This we find in the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians. In both the term is used not to describe something incomprehensible, but something not hitherto revealed or only partially revealed—something 'not made known unto the sons of men as it hath now been revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets in the spirit.' In Colossians we find the

Philip. ii.  
3—6.

II. Cor. viii.  
9.

Eph. i. 9.  
iii. 2—10.

iii. 5.

Col. ii. 2—3.  
(Rev. Ver.)



term applied to Christ as directly as in 1 Tim. iii. 16—thus: ‘That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;’ and this mystery is spoken of as ‘hid from all ages and generations, but now manifested to His saints, to whom God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory—whom we proclaim.’

Col. i. 25—28

As used by the Apostle Paul, then, the word mystery does not mean something transcendental, incomprehensible, or mysterious, in the popular sense of that word, but something that was once veiled or hidden, and is now unveiled or revealed. Even in passages where the idea of something mysterious seems at first to be the idea intended, the idea of something hitherto hidden and unknown is found on reflection to be the preferable interpretation, as in 1 Cor. xv. 51:—‘Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.’ This great and sudden change is very mysterious, as every one must feel. But that is not what Paul says. He revealed to the Corinthians what had hitherto been hidden, or at best only partially known, how that this mortal must put on immortality; and this corruptible must put on incorruption, when the trumpet shall announce the judgment day. He unveiled or uncovered this glorious truth on the authority of the revelation which, he said, he had received from Jesus Christ.

Rev. Ver.

We are now in a position to understand what the Apostle means when he says that ‘He who was

manifested in the flesh, is 'the mystery of godliness.' The statement is almost identical with that which we have quoted from the Epistle to the Colossians—'That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ.' Not only a mystery of God or of godliness, but *the* mystery, the hidden truth of former dispensations, the truth which was hidden or covered in promises and prophecies and types of old, but from which the veil has now been lifted, disclosing the eternal purpose which God purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. On this showing the Christ was the foundation of all the Divine dispensations. The gospel of the new dispensation was not a novelty. It was but the unveiling and unfolding of a Gospel which was from the beginning. But before it was unveiled and unfolded, even the prophets who testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, had to search what time and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point to; and it was revealed to them that not unto themselves, but unto us of the new dispensation, they did minister those things which have now been fulfilled in the Gospel.

Well might Paul call 'the Christ' 'the mystery of God,' or 'the mystery of godliness,' the once hidden truth of God Himself, of His will, and of His love; or, if one prefers a general term, the once hidden truth of religion, of God's religion, in the world. And great was this 'mystery,' great and glorious was the truth of which foregoing ages had but a dim perception, but which it was the commission of Apostles to preach to every creature under heaven, as the manifested Son of God.

*Here, then, we find the key which we are in search of, the key to the interpretation of the Old Testament.*

The key was not in the hands of saints of old, but it is in ours, and we can unlock by means of it the treasures of which the saints of old were the guardians. We need not press into the service of our argument the words of the angel, 'The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,' for their primary reference seems to be not to ancient prophecy as such, but to the prophets and preachers of the New Testament. The angel calls himself the fellow servant of John and of his brethren who bore witness to Jesus; and he adds that the bearing of witness to Jesus was the spirit of all divine ministry—the word 'prophecy' being used in the larger sense of the making known the Divine will. But the angel's word may be regarded as covering or including ancient prophecy, for we have seen that as a fact its revelations culminated in the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

Rev. xix. 10.

But the prophesying of ancient seers is not the only sphere which is illumined by the unveiling of the mystery of godliness. There are Biblical narratives of profound interest on which light is thrown, if we only accept the Apostle's dictum that Jesus was 'the mystery of God,' which had been hid during the ages that preceded His coming. We read in not a few passages of a person who is designated 'the angel of Jehovah,' who is identified with Jehovah Himself, and speaks as no mere minister of God could speak.

To Hagar this angel of Jehovah said, 'I will multiply thy seed exceedingly.' Three times besides the same person speaks under the same name; and at last it is added that Hagar called the name of Jehovah who had spoken to her, 'Thou art a God that seeth'; for

Gen. xvi.  
7—13.

- Rev. Ver. she said, 'Have I even here looked after Him that seeth me?'
- Gen. xviii. To Abraham three persons appeared in human form. Two of them passed on to Sodom, on a mission of righteous judgment; and they are called angels. The third remained with Abraham; and he repeatedly assumes and receives the name Jehovah. Though He is not expressly denominated the Angel, yet the attendant circumstances are such as agree with other manifestations in which that appellation is used.
- xxii. 11-12. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, the (Rev. Ver.) angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham: ' and he said, 'Here am I.' And He said, 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.'
- xxxii. 11-13. To Jacob when serving Laban, the Angel of God said in a dream, 'I am the God of Bethel.'
- Hosea xii. 1-5. With reference to the mysterious wrestling of Jacob (Rev. Ver.) at Peniel, a prophet says, 'He had power with God: yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: He found him at Bethel, and there He spake with us; even the LORD, the God of hosts: the LORD is his memorial.'
- Gen. xlviii. 15-16. In blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob said, 'The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which hath fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which hath redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.'
- Exod. iii. 2-6. To Moses 'the angel of Jehovah appeared in a flame of fire from the midst of the bush; and Jehovah saw that he turned aside to look; and God called to him from the midst of the bush: I am the God of thy

father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: I AM THAT I AM,' and long after Moses spoke of 'the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush,' as the fountain of all blessing.

Deut. xxxiii.  
16.

God said to Moses as the representative of Israel, 'Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice; provoke Him not for He will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in Him.'

Exod. xxiii.  
20—21.

In the book of Joshua we find a narrative in which a mysterious person, who first calls Himself Captain of the host of the Lord, is identified with the Lord Himself. This Captain of the host of the Lord addressed to Joshua the words which Jehovah addressed to Moses out of the burning bush: 'Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy.' No mere ministering spirit could thus claim the reverence which is due to God. The angel in the Apocalypse forbade John to do what the Captain of the host of the Lord required Joshua to do. In the sequel of the narrative this 'Captain' is named simply the Lord.

Jos. v. 15.  
vi. 2.

vi. 2.

The prophet Isaiah has these remarkable words: 'In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them and He carried them all the days of old.' 'This expression, *Angel of the presence of God*, intimates that the person so called declares, exemplifies, and executes the gracious purposes of the Almighty Father, for the temporal benefit and eternal salvation of men.' The last of the prophets writes these words: 'Behold I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me:

lxiii. 8—9.

Mal. iii. 1.

and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger (or angel) of the covenant whom ye delight in; behold He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Scripture  
Testimony,  
Vol. I., 302.

Dr. Pye Smith summarises these Scriptures thus: 'On bringing together the principal features in these remarkable descriptions, we find them to be plainly the following. The person described is always presented with circumstances and attributives which spread around him the most surpassing exhibitions of greatness and honour. It is observable that when celestial creatures are spoken of as a class, they are called angels, angels of God, and His angels, but we never meet with the plural phrase, *angels of Jehovah*. This person claims an uncontrolled sovereignty over the affairs of men. He has the attribute of omniscience and omnipresence. He performs works which only omnipotence could. He uses an awful formula, by which the Deity, on various occasions, condescended to confirm the faith of those to whom the primitive revelations were given—He sweareth by HIMSELF. He is the gracious Protector and Saviour, the Redeemer from evil, the Intercessor, and the Author of the most desirable blessings. His favour is to be sought with the deepest solicitude, as that which is of the highest importance to the interests of men. He is the object of religious invocation. He is, in the most express manner, and repeatedly, declared to be Jehovah, God, the ineffable I AM THAT I AM. Yet this mysterious person is represented as *distinct* from God, and acting (as the term *angel* imports) under a divine mission.'

The argument which I am prosecuting does not require that I should say aught by way of establishing

the truth of these mysterious narratives, or vindicating them from any charges which Rationalism might allege against them. But, in passing, lest any suspicions should mar my argument, I may repeat what I have said elsewhere, that, if God should be pleased to reveal or manifest Himself and His will, it is only reasonable to expect that He will do it in ways that are suitable to the moral, intellectual, and social condition in which He finds men. We cannot gauge the mental condition of the ages which preceded the Flood, and of the patriarchal and still later ages which followed. But we must take that condition into account when we read the histories of those olden times. And if we do we shall feel that the 'divers manners' in which God is said to have spoken to men possess no small degree of verisimilitude. And it is a noteworthy fact that even now, in our maturity, with all the light of Christianity, we turn with the deepest interest to the old-world stories of the Old Testament, and find them instinct with the highest truths and the purest lessons. Men, with the intellect and intelligence of a Bacon, are content to be taught by these Theophanies, which we seek to justify as in keeping with the childhood of the world. And they are right, for in these Theophanies—using the word as inclusive of all the earlier revelations of God—they see very God condescending, not unworthily, to instruct men as they were able to bear.

Whether these views be accepted or not, there the narratives are, and the question is, what shall we make of them? And the only answer I can give is that which is suggested by the Apostle when he speaks of Christ in Colossians as 'the mystery of God,' and in First Timothy as 'the mystery of godliness,' Christ *the*

'Handbook  
of Christian  
Evidences,'  
Part III.,  
ch. iv.

Old Testa-  
ment Theo-  
phanies  
still  
instructive.

*truth* which was veiled from former generations, but is now unveiled. Accepting this as the key to the explanation of those appearances of the person called 'the Angel of Jehovah,' we cannot but regard that angel who claimed Divine prerogatives and worship, as He who in the New Testament is called the Only-begotten Son, the Eternal Word, by whom, we thus conclude, God has revealed Himself and held intercourse with men in all ages. 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.' The appearances of the Angel of Jehovah in patriarchal and later times were true Theophanies, anticipations of the great Theophany, the Incarnation, when Christ was manifested in the flesh. Without the Divine Christ of the Gospels, those Old Testament narratives would have remained in all their obscurity unexplained.

John i. 18.

Anticipations of the great Theophany.

The removing of the veil from that which was hidden of old by the manifestation of Christ in the flesh throws very special light, likewise, on the worship of the dispensations which went before. Of that worship I need only say in brief, first, that God was approachable even by man, the sinner; and, secondly, that man's approach to God in worship was connected somehow with the shedding of blood in sacrifice. The world was fallen, man was guilty. God was just; so the ancients were taught and believed. But yet man was not driven from God's presence, but invited into it. There was forgiveness with God that He might be feared or worshipped. And yet without shedding blood there was no remission of sin. The explanation of all this is to be found in the fact that, according to the Apostle, Christ was 'the mystery,' the hidden truth, of former



generations. In the light of this fact, we can understand how it is said that the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world. Penitent sinners had the benefit of His sacrifice, although it was not yet offered, and although they understood not how the blessing came to them. When Christ was manifested in the flesh, it was all made plain. The veil was then lifted off the 'mystery of godliness'; that which was hidden from ages was revealed. And in view of the history of redemption as thus illumined by the coming of Christ in the flesh, what can we say, but with the Apostle, 'Oh! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out. For of Him, and through Him, and unto him, are all things. To Him be glory for ever, Amen.'

At this point it may be well to remark on *the mystery of the Book which we call the Bible*, and which consists of many portions, written in many ages, by many authors. Whether this many-portioned Book is in any sense inspired and of God, or not, there is a mystery in its contents and composition which demands explanation. One has said lately—'The Sacred books, which were once regarded as the stars by ancient astronomers, spangles set in the sky, floating masses of nebulous light, have now been resolved, by the telescope of scholarship, into their component parts.' What is thus ascribed to modern scholarship was familiarly known to the Jews, as we find from the pages of the New Testament and of Josephus, and is distinctly stated by the author of the first verse of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But accepting the figure, we have to ask whether the sacred books which are to us

The  
mystery of  
the book  
called the  
Bible. ;

Are it's  
parts  
related?

no longer as unresolved nebulae in the heavens, but as separate stars ('component parts'), are unconnected and unrelated, or whether, like the stars into which the nebulae have been resolved, they form a system, starry or solar? Are they a cosmos or a chaos? Do they form a whole, bound together by some natural principle or force, or are they disjointed fragments, 'wandering stars' in a sense in which it is believed that none of the heavenly bodies, not even comets, are? The 'sacred books' *seem*, at least, to be continuous, both historically and spiritually. And the more they are studied the more profound is their continuity seen to be. It is a continuity which could not have been invented by men forging or fabricating the books, long ages after the period to which they profess to belong. But whencesoever their internal unity and continuity, there it is. And a most marked feature of it is the onward, anticipative, or prophetic, spirit of the whole. Even without assuming that any particular passage is a specific Divine prediction, we cannot miss the fact that the men who wrote the books, and the people whose thoughts they represented—whether these thoughts were human or divine—lived in the future, hoped for, and believed in a great and better future for the world. The keynote of their expectations was struck in the oft-quoted words, 'The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.' Whether this was a Divine promise or a human imagination, and in whatever form the fulfilment of the words was expected, we have in them, in the very beginning of the Book, the confident expression of a hope of deliverance from some great evil or enemy to which man had somehow become subject—a hope which never disappears from the Book, and

which, before the Book closes, rises, as we have seen, to the confidence that the deliverance is very near at hand.

This fact becomes not less but more significant, when it is known that the hopes of deliverance, which are explicit and emphatic in our sacred books, may be traced, though dimly and vaguely, in other ancient books. If mankind be 'of one blood,' and if these hopes originated in the beginning of its history, we might expect to find traces of them in many lands. There is a great difference, however, between the form in which the prophetic anticipation of redemption inspires the historic and other Scriptures of the Jews, and the form or forms which it assumes in heathen writings and mythologies—a difference which suggests that in the former we have the true and genuine original, while in the latter we have only dreams and fancies in which it was perpetuated and imperfectly reproduced. But still the existence of these dreams and fancies confirms and illustrates the grand peculiarity of our sacred books, the prophetic expectation of a world's Redeemer and Redemption.

Whence that expectation? Whence its defined, unhesitating character? Whence its singular progression from age to age, its singular adoption and development by the successive writers of successive ages? The literature, sacred we call it, which has preserved to us the record of this great hope is a mystery, whether you call it nebulous or many-starred. But read in the light of the history of Jesus Christ the mystery is explained. Histories and dispensations which were instinct with what we now discover to have been a Divinely-breathed hope, stand revealed as in sunlight. Deny Jesus Christ, or deny His higher

claims, and you consign the past to a greater darkness than before. For now the hope that cheered the past perishes. If it has not been fulfilled in Christ, it has not been fulfilled at all. And the grounds on which its fulfilment in Christ are denied, will lead to the denial of the possibility of its fulfilment in any other. The light which lighted the men of some thousands of years onward to a glorious day of deliverance, was but an *ignis fatuus*, and has gone out for ever. 'Woe, woe, unto the world'—if we may echo the voice of the Son of Ananias on the eve of the destruction of Jerusalem:—'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against this whole people—Woe, woe.' Despair, utter and dark, in proportion to the brightness and confidence of hope to which prophecy had raised us, is the inevitable issue of the unbelief which denies that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

But we are not shut up to this terrible conclusion. Our faith in Christ is confirmed by the illumination which His coming sheds on the way through which God led the nations of old. 'When the destructive critics have done their worst,' to use the words of Doctor Liddon, 'we are still confronted by the fact of a considerable literature anterior to the age of Christianity, and foretelling in explicit terms the coming of a Divine and human Saviour. And we cannot be insensible to the significance of this broad and patent fact.' 'With His hand on the Jewish canon, Jesus Christ could look opponents or disciples in the face, and bid them search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify Me.'

## SECOND—HISTORIC.

I DO not forget the words of Jesus to the Jews—  
 ‘Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness  
 unto the truth. But the witness which I receive is  
 not from man.’ That is—the witness on which I rely  
 in proof that I am what I profess to be, the only witness  
 which I would invoke in support of My own, is not of  
 man. By AFTER or HISTORIC corroborations of the  
 claims of Christ, we do not mean witness rendered to  
 Him by ‘man,’ human testimony in support of His own,  
 or in support of the works which the Father gave Him  
 to accomplish, but only this, that, *as a matter of history,*  
*the supernatural in the person of Christ, and in the*  
*works of Christ, was included in the faith of His*  
*personal followers, and was preached by them to the*  
*world from the beginning.*

This may seem to assume the trustworthiness of  
 the historical books of the New Testament. But we  
 are content to assume no more than the general  
 historic truthfulness of the record which the Gospels  
 contain of the life of the Prophet of Nazareth; and  
 this is conceded even by critics who labour to elimin-  
 ate the supernatural from that life. Their speculations  
 respecting Him and His mission in the world are based  
 on the books which bear the names of Matthew, Mark,  
 Luke, and John, independently of the question whether  
 these books were written in the first or second century.  
 They take exception, it is true, to certain discourses

John v.  
33—34.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Not witness  
by man.

John v. 36.  
(Rev. Ver.)

What we  
maintain.

The four  
Gospels.

as well as to certain deeds recorded in the books. And by such processes as they apply to these discourses, they pronounce some of them to be ungenueine or marred by the tradition which has preserved them. But the Gospels, whether wholly true or only partially true, are the only histories which have survived of the Founder and of the Beginning of Christianity. And that class of the sayings of Christ with which we are specially concerned is so large, so varied, so inextricably interwoven with other sayings—giving them colour and receiving colour from them—that any attempt to extract and cancel them would be the destruction of the whole. As well cast the books into the sea at once. Mr. John Stuart Mill, who took his place outside the pale of Christianity, said: ‘It is of no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much that is admirable has been superadded by the tradition of His followers. The tradition of followers suffices to insert any number of marvels, and may have inserted all the miracles which He is reputed to have wrought [?]. But who among His disciples, or among their proselytes, was capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus, or of imagining the life and character revealed in the Gospels? Certainly not the fishermen of Galilee, as certainly not St. Paul.’ Mr. Mill’s further statement that the other Gospels do not contain a vestige of such speeches about Christ Himself as are to be found in St. John, we have seen to be not only incorrect but the opposite of truth. And we claim that the sayings about Himself in St. John, of which we have no literal parallels in the other Gospels, be reckoned among those which neither the fishermen of Galilee, nor St. Paul, nor any other disciple, could have in-

John S. Mill  
on the  
Sayings of  
Christ.

Sayings in  
John.

vented and interwoven with all His teaching. These sayings, moreover, bear that 'stamp of personal originality' which Mr. Mill sees impressed on the general teaching of our Lord; and with reference to them we can maintain in a very special sense that 'never man spake like this man.' Keim does not hesitate to acknowledge the historical character of those sayings in which Jesus applied to Himself 'overwhelming names and titles before which all human categories seem to sink into silence.'

Keim on the  
Sayings of  
Christ.

There is no more true reason for questioning the historical character of the Acts of the Apostles than for questioning that of the Gospels. Certain it is that there is no other extant history of the first preaching of those whom Christ commissioned to make Him known to mankind. And its genuineness as a primitive and honest history has been fully vindicated against the theory which is known as the Tübingen. Any full discussion of this theory would be out of place here, and reference is made to it only lest the ignoring of it might seem to be an evasion of a difficulty.

The Acts of  
the Apostles

C. F. Baur, a Tübingen professor, saw that all the forms of Rationalism by which it had been attempted either to account for Christianity or to destroy it, had failed to do either the one or the other. The older Rationalists 'possessed too little perception to be able to appreciate even approximately the significance of Paul.' Strauss and his predecessors left the Church of the early centuries completely hanging in the air. Dr. Baur 'saw that it would no longer suffice to assail the authority of individual books of Scripture, or to explain away its supernatural contents by whatever expedient lay readiest to hand. The books are there and must

C. F. Baur.

be accounted for. The Primitive Church was a solid historical fact. By the end of the second century it presents itself to us, furnished with its new Scriptures, a world-wide community, already rooted in the past, and involved in close and manifold relations with the life of the world around. How has all this come about? If the Christ of Paul and of John be a myth, at any rate the Church of Irenæus and Tertullian is a fact, and facts rest on antecedent facts, not on mere fancies. Suppose the traditional view of the genesis of Christianity to be a superstition, what rational account of the matter can we render? This was the question.'

Whence  
Christian-  
ity?

The  
Tubingen  
answer.

The essential points of the Tubingen answer may be summarised briefly. The disciples of Christ did not enter fully into the spirit and teaching of their Master in regard to the abolishment of all distinction, as to religious rights and privileges, between Jew and Gentile. They continued to believe that the Gentile must enter the Church through the door of Judaism. The Apostle Paul alone attained unto the truth in this matter. Hence there arose a radical difference in doctrine between Peter and the Jerusalem Christians on the one hand, and Paul and his followers on the other, which led to a personal disagreement and estrangement between these two apostolic leaders. There grew up two antagonistic types of Christianity, two divisions of the Church, separate and unfriendly to each other. Such was the state of things at the end of the apostolic age. Then followed attempts to reconcile the difference, and to bridge the gulf that separated Gentile from Jewish, Pauline from Petrine Christianity. To this end various books were written

Antagonis-  
tic types.

Pauline and  
Petrine.



in the name of the Apostles and their helpers. Chief of these is the Acts of the Apostles, written in the earlier part of the second century by a Pauline Christian, who, by making Paul something of a Judaiser, and then representing Peter as agreeing with him in the recognition of the rights of the Gentiles, hoped, not in vain, to produce a mutual friendliness between the respective partisans of the rival Apostles. The epistles of Paul to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Corinthians, were however acknowledged to be genuine, and are so acknowledged universally to this day.

For my present purpose it is enough to remark that the foundation fact of this theory is not a fact—the alleged doctrinal difference between Paul and Peter. The only difference between them, of which we know anything historically, is reported in the Epistle to the Galatians. Peter, on occasion of a visit to Antioch, acted openly on the principle which he had been taught by the memorable vision with which he was favoured at Joppa, and ate freely with the Gentile Christians. But on the arrival of certain zealous Judaisers from Jerusalem, he drew back and separated himself from them. Then it was that Paul rebuked his brother Apostle; but his rebuke reveals not a fundamental doctrinal difference, but a fundamental doctrinal agreement. It was their oneness in their conception of ‘the truth of the Gospel,’ that a man is ‘justified, not by the works of the law, but by the faith of Christ,’ that gave point to Paul’s condemnation of Peter’s conduct. Before this the Jerusalem church acknowledged the sameness of the Gospel of Paul and the Gospel of Peter. This we know without any reference to the Acts of the Apostles. The

Not based  
on fact.

Gal. ii. 11,  
&c.

Acts x.

Gal. ii.  
7—10.

Authorship  
of the Acts.

Tubingen theory then is not based on the facts of history; it is an assumption, and all the learning and ingenuity of those who propounded it were employed to mould the facts into conformity with it. But there are very few men of any critical school who doubt that the Acts of the Apostles was written by the same Luke who wrote the third Gospel, and who was the friend and companion of Paul during the later part of his missionary life. We are not following an unsupported tradition, but standing on well-tried historic ground, when we turn to the Acts of the Apostles to ascertain how the first followers of Christ preached His Gospel.

What  
Apostles  
preached.

See Acts ii.  
36.

v. 30—31.

‘Apostles’—  
Acts v. 29.

Prince and  
Saviour.

The first recorded discourse of theirs is that of Peter, of which we have an outline, only an outline, in the Second Chapter of the ‘Acts.’ The conclusion of Peter’s argument on this occasion is given in these words: ‘Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Addressing the rulers of Israel, Peter said, ‘The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins.’ What is to be noted here is that what the Apostles preached from the beginning was not the ethical doctrines of their Master, nor what the Tubingen critics assume to have been ‘the principle’ of His mission—the abrogation of the exclusive laws of Judaism—but their Master Himself: their Master, crucified, raised from the dead, now Lord and Christ, Prince and Saviour. Without determining all that is involved in these designations, they are designations which distinguish Jesus from all other servants of the

most High God, and which ascribed to Him sovereignty and salvation. Jesus is *now* Sovereign and Saviour—the Apostle said. He was to them, not a memory of the past, but their living Lord. And as such they prayed to Him, as knowing the hearts of men, and as having the right and power to determine who should be numbered with the Apostles in the room of the traitor.

Acts i. 24.

The Apostles, it is true, did not, in addressing those who had seen and heard Jesus, use such language as we find in the fourth Gospel: The word was God, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. They based their appeals and arguments on facts which were well known to the people of Jerusalem: ‘Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you, by mighty works and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know: Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye, by the hand of lawless men, did crucify and slay, whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death; because it was not possible He should be holden of it.’ In taking this ground, Peter followed the example of his Master, who, even in teaching His disciples, trained them as they were able to bear it, till they could exclaim, ‘My Lord and my God.’ Peter did not, however, allow the people to imagine that he regarded Christ as only ‘a man approved of God,’ for he said even to the Sadducean rulers of the nation, ‘He is the stone which was set at nought of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.’ In saying this Peter was echoing words which he had

ii. 22—24.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Example of  
the Master.

Acts iv.  
11—12.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Isa. xlv. 22.

often heard from the lips of Jesus, and echoing, whether consciously or not, those great words of the Old Testament: 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else.' Salvation in or by the name of Christ, is salvation by Christ Himself, and the Christ who alone saves men cannot be a merely human Christ. The first Apostles did not so regard Him.

Between  
Pentecost  
and First  
Epistle of  
Peter.I. Peter i.  
18-20,  
also  
vv. 8-11,  
iii. 18,  
iv. 11.

The years which intervened between the day of Pentecost and the writing of Peter's first Epistle wrought no change in this Apostle's conception of Christ and of His work, as a single sentence will show: 'For as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you; who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory.'

The  
Apostle  
John.The  
Apocalypse.

As to the writings of the Apostle John, there are few even of those who deny his authorship of the fourth Gospel, who are not prepared to admit that he wrote the Apocalypse. And most critics of to-day, whether rightly or wrongly, hold that this book was written about 68 or 69 A.D. To this book, then, apart from all theories as to its date and interpretation, we may appeal on the question of fact. Were those lofty conceptions of the person of Christ, which we find in the four Gospels, and which, according to these Gospels, Christ Himself asserted, entertained by the immediate followers of Christ, or were they post-apostolic, the

growth of an after age? The answer is to be found in the very first chapter: 'Grace be unto you, and peace, from Him which is and which was, and which is to come; and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed (or washed) us from our sins by His blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.' 'He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the First and the Last and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore; and I have the keys of death and of Hades.' The whole book rests upon, and is pervaded with, these views of the personal glory and rulership of Christ. 'Every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion for ever and ever. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped.' In the nineteenth chapter He is designated 'The Word of God,' and described as 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords.'

In the fourth Gospel there is nothing higher said *about* Christ by its author, or recorded as having been said by Christ about Himself, than we have here. And even if we make that Gospel of none effect, we have in the Apocalypse evidence that the Apostle to whom the Gospel is ascribed was acquainted with, and held, those exalted views of Christ which the Gospel contains. Pfeiderer, who differs from most of his Rationalistic brethren in questioning the Johannine

Rev. i. 4—6.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Rev. i.  
17—18.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Rev. v.  
13—14.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Rev. xix.  
13—16.  
Nothing  
higher in  
the Gospels.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 158, &c.

The  
Apocalypse  
and Paul  
compared.

authorship of the Apocalypse, but has no doubt that it was written about the year 68 A.D., compares the doctrinal teaching of this book with that of Paul, and finds them identical. 'Like the Pauline Christology, that of the author of the Apocalypse,' he says 'hinges on the one hand on the expiatory death, and on the other on the celestial glory of Christ, whilst the earthly life of Jesus is referred to only so far that Christ is called the "offspring of David," and the "Lion of Judah," just as Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, had connected Christ's descent from David with his Divine Sonship. As Paul denominated Christ the Passover slain for us, so our author likes to describe Him as the Lamb slain for us. . . . As, according to Paul, Christ had been exalted to the regal dignity of divine dominion over all, so, according to our author, He has taken His seat on the throne by the side of His Father, participating therefore in His Divine dominion and power; He is the Lord of the churches, holds their stars, or guardian angels, in His hand, and is also Ruler of nations and King of kings, the All-wise and Almighty Judge of the nations; indeed, to Him is due a worship similar to that of God Himself.'

Author  
of 'Super-  
natural  
Religion.'

The intensely anti-supernatural author of the book 'Supernatural Religion,' who has no doubt that the Apocalypse was written by the Apostle John, and that it was written about A. D. 68, says, 'It possesses the greatest value as an indication of John's views,' and, 'If it be merely regarded as a contemporary writing, it still is most interesting as an illustration of the religious feeling of the period.' All which is an admission that those exalted views of the supernatural person and mission of Jesus Christ which pervade the Apocalypse from beginning to end, did not spring up

in a post-apostolic age, but were held by the most intimate and privileged of Christ's personal followers, such as the beloved disciple, and generally by the Christians of the apostolic period. To all this Strauss has nothing to say but that 'it gives us a melancholy impression of the imperfect way in which Christ was understood by His most intimate friends.' *He* knows better than John or Peter what Christ said and meant; and wherein John and Peter differ from Strauss, they must be wrong and he right!

Strauss.

We now turn to the Apostle Paul, and although he was not a follower of Christ during His personal ministry, we shall find ourselves on very solid ground. To begin with, let it be remembered, as so often stated, that four of the Epistles which bear Paul's name are universally accepted as genuine, those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. The later critics of the Tübingen school, such as Pfleiderer, admit the genuineness of 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, Philemon, and parts of some others. But we are content to be confined in our argument to the four which all acknowledge. Further, there is a general consensus as to the theology of Paul contained in these Epistles. Whencesoever Paul acquired it, howsoever he came by it, or whatsoever authority it may or may not possess, there is scarcely any doubt as to what it is in its main features. 'Was the crucified Jesus really the risen Christ and Lord from heaven?' says Pfleiderer. 'As soon as this question had been set at rest by the vision of Christ, the fundamental principle of Paul's gospel was settled in his mind. The very thing that had previously been to him the stone of stumbling and offence, then became the foundation and corner stone of his new religious

The Apostle Paul.

Four Epistles unquestioned.

Hibbert Lectures, pp. 48-49.

Paul's  
Gospel  
according to  
Pfleiderer.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 59.

The death  
of Christ.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 62.

pp. 49,  
50-59.

system. Thenceforth he determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ as the crucified and risen Lord. These two facts (which in his view become one, in so far as it was precisely by His resurrection that the crucified Jesus was shown to be the Christ, and the saving efficacy of His death on the cross was guaranteed) constitute the Alpha and Omega of his gospel.' After saying that, according to Paul, 'the terrestrial Jesus is the appearance of the celestial Son of God and archetypal man, Christ clothed in a body of flesh,' he says, 'we might therefore regard it, according to our mode of thought, as most natural and probable that precisely this appearance of a holy human life was the object of the sending of Christ and the means of the salvation of a sinful world. However, frequently as the teaching of Paul is thus interpreted, particularly in recent theology, such was by no means his idea. If it had been, how could the earthly life of Jesus have been of little importance to him, as we have seen was actually the case? On the contrary, that the *death* rather than the life of Jesus should be regarded by Paul as the divinely ordained means of salvation, undoubtedly corresponds much more closely with the origin of his Christology.' Again, 'Inasmuch (according to Paul) as Christ is not simply a righteous man after the Jewish ideal, not merely an ordinary earthly man, but the holy Son of God and man from heaven, He has not to suffer at all for sin of His own; His death, therefore, as the voluntary taking upon Himself of the curse of the law, may be reckoned exclusively to the advantage of others.'

We must take exception to the statement that the earthly life of Jesus was of little importance to Paul, and that the historical information he may have gathered



respecting it was of little moment as regards his line of Christian thought. If such statements were correct, it might be argued that there was an unbridged gulf between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of Paul. Is it credible that a man such as Paul was, should have refrained from carefully and eagerly seeking to know all that he could gather respecting his Master? Let Keim answer the question: 'Shall we suppose that he believed in the Messiah, and yet had troubled himself, either not at all, or only superficially and generally, about those facts which must support or overthrow his faith?' We are thus led to two conclusions: in the first place, the Apostle's faith must have rested, not upon the meagre notices of the person of Jesus which we find in his writings, but upon a knowledge of His life sufficiently comprehensive to justify all the results of his reasoning, and to present to his mind, either on the ground of his own observation or that of others, the picture of a character without spots and full of nobility. And, in the second place, this knowledge is not the fruit of a blind acceptance of unexamined Christian tradition, picked up here and there, but, as the case of the inquiry into the evidences of the resurrection shows, was arrived at by means of a lucid, keen, searching, sceptical observation, comparison, collection, and collation of such materials as were accessible to him. More than this, even in Paul's theological system, Keim sees only an additional sign of the concern with which he must have scanned the traditional, that is, the historical facts of the life of Jesus. 'The Apostle's independent system of ideas,' he says, 'resting as it does upon the traditional facts of the life of Jesus, is itself a new and eloquent testimony to the immense

Keim on  
Paul's  
knowledge  
of Christ's  
life.

'Jesus of  
Nazara,'  
Vol. I., p. 52.

interest felt in the person of Jesus immediately after His departure; and even when the bloody traces of a criminal death were still fresh.'

Paul's  
Jesus,

Who then was Jesus of Nazareth, and what was His mission in the world, according to this great preacher of Christianity?

Rom. i.  
1-4,

We answer—that *his letters recognise in express terms the personal claims asserted by and for Jesus during His earthly ministry.* The very first words of the letter to the Romans may be regarded as the keynote to all his writings: 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead?' These words tell us unmistakably that Jesus Christ was the Lord, not the fellow-servant of Paul; that this Lord of the Apostles was possessed of a twofold nature, being the Son of David and the Son of God; and that His higher nature was placed beyond doubt by His resurrection from the dead. In a later part of the same letter, the Apostle says, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord [Jesus Christ]; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' Here we have Jesus Christ represented as the Lord of all and the Judge of

Jesus Lord,  
Paul  
servant.

xiv. 8-12.

all; our standing before the judgment seat of Christ is represented as giving an account of ourselves to God; and an Old Testament passage, in which Jehovah says, 'I am God, and there is none else,' is quoted in proof, or, if you will, in illustration, of the statement that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of *Christ*. What need we further witness that the author of the letter to the Christian Church in Rome, recognised the very highest claims which the Gospels ascribe to the Prophet of Nazareth?

Isa. xlv.  
22—23.

Passing on to the letters which Paul is admitted to have written to the Church in Corinth, we find that Christ is 'the Lord of glory'; 'the Lord from heaven'; 'by whom are all things,' 'the image of God.' In the second letter we read: 'We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.' And in the same letter we find words which associate Christ with God, in a manner that is nothing less than blasphemous, if Christ be only a man—'the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.' But further quotation is unnecessary, except to remind the reader of the prominence given to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the importance attached to it in 1 Cor. xv., a fact with the certainty or uncertainty of which Christianity, according to Paul, must stand or fall.

Corinth.

I. Cor. ii. 8.  
xv. 47.  
viii. 6.  
II. Cor. iv. 4.  
v. 10.

The Benediction—  
II. Cor. xiii.  
14.

It is not, however, in express terms alone that the acknowledged letters of Paul recognise the personal claims asserted by and for Christ: *the whole Christian system, as developed by this Apostle, rests on these*

Paul's  
whole  
system.

*claims.* The Christianity expounded by Paul is not a system of morality based on the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, but a system of redemption from a state of sin and guilt, effected by the incarnation and death of the Son of God, based on those very teachings respecting Himself and His work which we find in the four Gospels. The author of 'Supernatural Religion' admits that before Christ's followers had passed away 'intricate systems of dogma and mysticism began to prevail.' The systems, or system rather, so described, is the system of Redemption which is developed and maintained, fully and urgently, by the Apostle Paul, and of which he said, 'If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be anathema.' Now it can scarcely be denied that between this system and the words which the Gospels ascribe to Christ respecting Himself there is a most perfect correspondence; and that, in fact, the so-called 'dogma and mysticism' of Paul grew out of, or are built upon, or at least perfectly harmonise with, what the Gospels say concerning Christ. If the personal claims of Christ, as they appear in our Gospels, are unhistorical, being only after-thoughts of His disciples, the system of Paul is baseless, and must be regarded as the product of his own brain, or of the many brains, acting indeed not in concert, but separately, though towards one end, which were then unconsciously, rather than consciously, giving new shapes and colours to the imperfectly remembered words of the departed Master. But interpret the correspondence between our extant Gospels and the letters of Paul as you may, the fact of the correspondence remains. And so far as the testimony of these letters may be regarded as relevant, it supports, independently of the Gospels, the transcen-

Gal. i. 8.

Correspondence  
between  
St. Paul's  
system and  
Christ's  
words.

dent personal claims of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of man.

Now, *how far is the testimony of Paul's letters relevant?* It amounts at the least to this, that, as early as A.D. 56—58, *the foremost preacher of Christianity*—whose faith, according to Keim, 'must have rested on a knowledge of Christ's life, sufficiently comprehensive to justify all the results of his reasoning'—*held the founder of his faith to be all that He is represented in the Gospels as saying that He was.* The extraordinary claims alleged by the Gospels to have been asserted by Christ cannot possibly have originated at a period later than three and twenty years after the death of Christ; for at that date we find them recognised, and made the basis of a 'system' which, from that time until now, has been, with very few exceptions, accepted as the very essence of the Christian faith.

But this is not all. The Christianity which Paul maintained in A.D. 56, he tells us, is the Christianity which he had preached from the very beginning of his ministry. 'When it pleased God to reveal His Son in me that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.' 'I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again according to the Scriptures.' Now Paul's conversion took place between

Date of  
Paul's  
testimony.

Back to the  
beginning  
of Paul's  
ministry.

See Gal.  
i. and ii.

I. Cor. xv.  
1—4.

Date of  
Paul's con-  
version.

A.D. 35 and A.D. 38. Keim fixes the date as A.D. 37, and Renan as A.D. 38. We are thus brought to within three or five years of the death of Christ. So that the witness borne to Christ's personal claims in the year 56 covers the entire period backward to A.D. 37 or 38, and proves that at the earlier period as well as at the later, the Apostle Paul recognised and proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God as well as the Son of Man, once crucified, now risen, and glorified in heaven as Lord of all. What he says of himself in A.D. 58 was true, all the twenty years that preceded :—

Gal. ii. 20. 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

The testimony of Paul's letters to the personal claims of Christ goes still further. Three years after his conversion he went up to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter. On the same occasion he saw James, 'the Lord's brother.' At this time he was unknown by face to the churches of Judæa, in which Peter and James held the most prominent place, but they had heard of his conversion, and that he now preached the faith which once he destroyed, and they glorified God in him. At this period, then, the evidence is conclusive that Paul and the Judæan churches under the leadership of Peter and James, were one in their conception of the Christian faith. Fourteen years after, in consequence of a controversy which was producing dissension and confusion in the churches, a controversy regarding the continued obligation of Judaic rites, he went up to Jerusalem to confer with Peter and John and James, the recognised pillars of the Church, lest his work among the Gentiles should be hindered. The result was a perfect under-

i. 18—19.

Implies the  
testimony  
of Peter  
and James.

Peter, John,  
and James.

Gal. ii. 7—9.

standing regarding the one point in dispute, and a cordial Godspeed to Paul and Barnabas in their mission to Gentile lands by those whose special mission was to the Jews. From all which it follows that the testimony of Paul respecting Christ and Christianity, from a period of three or five years after the death of Christ to a period twenty years later, is equally the testimony of Peter, John, and James, 'the Lord's brother,' who held so prominent and influential a place in the church in Jerusalem. The evidence is thus conclusive that during these twenty years the founders of the Christian churches, among both Jews and Gentiles, held in substance the same views respecting the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We are now within five years *at the most* of the date of Christ's personal ministry. How shall we bridge over those five years? The book known as the 'Acts of the Apostles' gives us the history. And we have seen what that history tells us of the preaching of Peter. Only some such history can account for the facts, as from Paul's history and letters we know them to have been at and after A.D. 35. And this alone is presumptive evidence that the history is true. But my present argument is based entirely on Paul's acknowledged letters. Now, I ask, is it possible that a Christ, who was only a teacher of morals and of certain beautiful truths concerning God, should in the course of five years (the period may have been only three) have become in the imagination of his followers personally Divine and the Divine Saviour of mankind? Is it possible that in the course of three or five years the true teaching of Christ respecting Himself should have been entirely lost from the memories of those who heard it, and should have been superseded by a

Within five  
years of  
Christ's  
death.

supposititious teaching which claimed for Him the position which they knew He ever after held in the esteem of those who called themselves by His name? Is it possible that all this could have occurred in three or five years—years of Christian activity and thought—and that, in consequence, an absolutely new departure of Christianity from its original ‘simplicity’ should have taken place, *and that, too, without challenge or controversy?*

This question becomes the more decisive as we descend to particulars. Three or five years after the death of Christ, Peter and John, who had been His followers from the beginning to the end of His ministry, who had heard both His public discourses and His private teachings—and one of those ‘brothers’ of Jesus who at first doubted His Messiahship—held, with Paul, we have seen, those lofty conceptions of His person and character which pervade the letters of Paul; with him they believed that He was the Son of God as well as the Son of David, that He died for our sins and rose again on the third day, and that He must reign till He hath put all enemies, death itself included, under His feet. Let us suppose that during the three years of their intimacy with Him He made no pretensions to anything supernatural. Strauss says, ‘We know for certain at least what Jesus was not and did not do, viz., nothing superhuman nor supernatural.’ Then Peter and John knew all this ‘for certain.’ They were drawn to Him simply by the beauty of His character, and the graciousness of His words. If at any time they dreamed that it was He who should, according to the hopes awakened by ancient prophecy, have redeemed Israel, their hopes perished when He

What Peter and John believed three or five years after the death of Christ.

1. Cor. xv.  
3, 4, 25—26.

Some sup-  
positions.

Luke xxiv.  
21.



perished in the cruel death to which He was doomed by the rulers of the nation. The seal on His grave was broken by no Divine 'Come forth.' His sepulchre, like that of David, was with them unto that day; the witness that, like ordinary mortals, He 'saw corruption,' and should not awake until the last trumpet shall sound. We are to suppose all this, that the words in which the Gospels represent Him as exalting Himself above all that is named on earth, were never spoken, that the mighty works which the Gospels say He worked in Judæa and Galilee were never wrought. We are to suppose all this, and that 'they knew it for certain.' And yet three or five years after, they all, without exception, and without controversy, believe Him to have wrought miracles, to have claimed to Himself all power in heaven and on earth, to have risen from the dead, and to have ascended into heaven, whence He should return in power and great glory. How then shall we bridge over the tremendous gulf between what 'they knew for certain' during the three years A.D. 30—33, and what they believed for certain in A.D. 36—38? How account for the marvellous change?

That the personal followers of Christ did undergo a change immediately after the decease of their Master is not denied, but contended for; and if we accept the Gospel histories, we shall find a rational explanation of the change and of its causes. During the lifetime of their Master, His teachings regarding Himself, and still more regarding the spirituality of His mission and kingdom, had to contend with their deeply rooted presuppositions respecting the Messiahship. He had to tell them that they must become as little children, and cast away the notions in which they had been

Incredib'e  
and impos-  
sible sup-  
positions.

What  
change the  
Apostles  
underwent.

John vi. 68.

Truer views  
of the  
Kingdom.II. Cor. iv.  
6.Only a  
develop-  
ment.

trained, and teachably accept His word if they would enter His kingdom. But this it was very difficult for them to do. They did feel the attraction of His character; they did appreciate His 'words of eternal life,' and so appreciated them, that even when they were stumbled at some of His hard sayings, they would not forsake Him, and were still constrained to confess that He was the Son of God. But the new did not mingle well with the old; and the result was weakness, inconsistency, and confusion. All this came to an end when He died and rose again, and they received the illumination which He had promised. They were now purged of the elements of earthliness and carnality, which appear so prominently in the history of their intercourse with their Master. They now rose to higher, purer, more spiritual apprehensions of Himself and His work. What was only as starlight while Jesus Christ was with them 'in the flesh,' leaving many interspaces of darkness in their souls, became now as sunlight, illumining the whole horizon of their spiritual vision. And if they were asked to explain the change which had come over them, they could find no fitter words than those of Paul, 'God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

The disciples thus became new men. The change was great. But it was only the development of what went before. It presupposes that they had heard the words, and witnessed the works, which surrounded the person of Christ with a supernatural halo, and that their understanding of these was no longer eluded by 'earth-born' prepossessions. It assumes, too, that Jesus had 'risen indeed' and 'ascended to glory,'

to reign, not in the city of David, but in heaven above.

This is the change which actually took place, and this its explanation. But the change which we are required to suppose, if the representations of the Gospels are rejected, is altogether different. It is this—from ‘knowing for certain’ that there was nothing supernatural about Christ, they came to ‘know for certain’ that He was Himself supernatural, that He asserted for Himself supernatural claims, that He wrought supernatural works, that He rose from the dead supernaturally, and that He was supernaturally taken up from the midst of them, a cloud finally receiving Him out of their sight! The change, be it observed, is not a change from what the *first* followers of Christ believed to what was believed by the *second* or *third* generation of His followers. It is a change *in* the first followers, in the most intimate, most loving, most loved, followers of Jesus! And a change which took place in at most five years! Is it credible? How shall we account for it?

Shall we suppose it to have taken place unconsciously and unintentionally? That Peter, John, James, and all their fellows, dreamed away all their genuine recollections of their Master, and dreamed themselves into ideas of the ‘uttermost contrariety’ to the true facts of His history—ideas, however, which, though growing out of dreams and not out of realities, produced, when preached to the world, a moral revolution whose cause is still onward? Again, I ask, is this credible? Those who regard the supernatural narratives of the Gospels as unintentional fictions, produced by the imagination of the first Christian churches, require a long space of time and many concurrent

An  
incredible  
change.

In the first  
followers of  
Christ.

Myths  
require a  
long space  
of time.

circumstances to account for them. But here we have no such space of time as that theory requires, and we have no traditional reporting of sayings and doings, re-shaping them unconsciously as they pass on from one to another. We have to do with the original witnesses and actors. And nothing short of a miracle could have cancelled from their memory 'that which they had heard, which they had seen with their eyes, which they had looked upon, and their hands had handled,' and replaced it with contraries, which, nevertheless, they believed so certainly that they were prepared to die for them! There is no explanation to be found in the alleged enthusiasm of the disciples, of the extraordinary changes supposed to have taken place in them. To make the disciples what they became after the departure of Christ, and to invent for them unconsciously so glorious a personage as the Christ whom they ever after preached to the world, enthusiasm must be the greatest miracle worker that has ever dwelt among men. Accept the supernatural statements of the Gospels and of the Pauline Epistles, and the whole history becomes perfectly natural; reject these supernatural statements, and you have to fabricate a history that is totally unnatural.

Enthusiasm  
no explanation.

Another  
supposition.

Shall we suppose, then, that the change from the knowledge of a Christ in whom there was nothing superhuman or supernatural to faith in a Christ, who, according to Paul, was not only superhuman but Divine, was conscious and intentional? In that case we have to ask with Christlieb: 'Is it possible or conceivable that sinful and imperfect men should beget the thought of so holy and Godlike a life, and should carry it out in this vivid and lifelike manner—not have received it as an impression *from without*? This

\* Modern  
doubt and  
Christian  
belief.'

would be a miracle more perplexing and unheard of than any of those which Strauss rejects, and the whole issue would only be transferred from the person of Christ to that of the historian.' The question: how, if there were no signs of the superhuman in Christ when He lived with His Apostles on earth, they conceived those ideas of His person and work which appear in their writings, and which form the very essence of their Christianity, remains not only unanswered but unanswerable.

There is one consideration, very obvious and common-place, which renders such a change as is supposed, whether intentional or unintentional, utterly incredible. *The change, if it took place, was universal, and it was unchallenged.* The evidence proves that from a period only three or five years after the death of Christ, the personal followers of Christ were all of one mind in regarding Him as the Lord and Saviour and Judge of men. If, at an earlier period, they regarded Him only as a wise Rabbi, and understood Him to claim no higher character, how comes it to pass that of the one hundred and twenty of whom we read at one time, or of the five hundred of whom we read at another, who had known Him from the first, there were none to raise their voice against so monstrous an exaggeration or so wicked a perversion? Here was treason against the truth, compared with which that of Judas was harmless—for his, on the supposition before us, only led to the death of a man, but the treason of the 'multitude of the disciples' against the truth has established a new idolatry in the world. And not treason alone, but a most extraordinary conspiracy to

Change un-  
challenged.

Treason and  
conspiracy!

Judaic controversy—  
but no doctrinal.

sustain the treason—and yet there is no voice lifted up against it! This is intrinsically incredible! And still the more so, because we know that controversy did arise in the Church on another and a far less important matter—the controversy already referred to, respecting the permanence of Jewish rites. During a great part of the twenty years which intervened between the conversion of Paul and the writing of the letter to the Galatians, this controversy prevailed, and was often waged so fiercely as to destroy the peace of the churches, and greatly to mar the usefulness of the Apostle of the Gentiles. But during all this period there was no question raised as to the substance of the Gospel which was preached by Paul and Peter and John. False teachers dogged the steps of Paul, and stirred up Jewish prejudice against him. But their charge was only this, that he taught men to forsake the customs which Moses had delivered to them. Never and nowhere was he charged with exalting a man to divine honours, with converting a great Teacher into a great Saviour—in one word, with a radical misrepresentation of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth. Now, ‘is it conceivable, as a matter of history, that while a comparatively trifling controversy is recorded concerning the obligation of the Gentiles to keep the Jewish law, not one word should be written to indicate that the Apostles were not of one mind about the position occupied by Christ in the scheme of salvation, had such been the case?’ And if it be admitted that the Apostles were of one mind, but said that they were all in error, that either through blind enthusiasm or ‘pious distortion’ (which polite phrase must mean impious fraud), they had entirely departed from the faith delivered to them by their Master concerning

The  
Apostles of  
one mind.

Himself and His work, is it conceivable that all this could be without protest by either friend or foe? Were there no 'original' believers to tell the world how grossly and unfaithfully the Apostles of Christ were misleading mankind? Why did not unbelievers protest? Why did they not appeal to the surviving contemporaries and followers of Jesus, in disproof of the miracles which were now ascribed to Him, and of claims which He had never asserted, and which, in His lowliness and loyalty to God, He would most assuredly have repudiated? But no such protest was ever made. And the conclusion is inevitable that not only were the Apostles of one mind respecting Christ, but that they were right; they were not false, but true witnesses of what they had seen and heard.

No protest.

There is a New Testament book to which we may appeal for historical evidence, as we might to any book not included in our Scriptures—the Epistle to the Hebrews. Whether written by Paul or by Apollos, or by anyone else, that it was in existence in the first century is certain. The earliest Christian writing beyond the limits of the New Testament, is the epistle addressed to the Church in Corinth (about 95 A.D.), by Clement, in the name of the Church in Rome. This epistle contains no express quotations from any of the books of the New Testament, but in several places words from Paul's Epistles are interwoven with the text without formal introduction. In exactly the same way, but to a greater extent, does Clement make use of the epistle to the Hebrews, which proves that at this early date it was well known to the Church in Rome.

The Epistle  
to the  
Hebrews.

Early  
known in  
Rome.

We open it then, as we should any other ancient

Its Christ.

Heb. i. 2-4  
(Rev. Ver.).

To be wor-  
shipped by  
angels.  
Heb. i. 8, 6.  
His  
humanity.

Question of  
fact.

The people  
addressed.

document, to ascertain what the writer thought of Christ, and by fair inference what those thought of Him to whom he wrote. And this we find in the first two chapters in words so plain that he that runneth may read and cannot misunderstand. 'God hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.' Then follow quotations from the Old Testament in which He is expressly called God, and in which the very angels are charged to worship Him. In the second chapter, the humanity of Christ is asserted as strongly as His Divinity is in the first, and reason is given why the Son, whose throne is for ever and ever, should become man, and should suffer even unto death. The main drift of what follows is to show that the ancient Priesthood and Sacrifice were typical of, and received their fulfilment in, Jesus Christ and His work.

That the writer interpreted the Old Testament and the New correctly, we have no doubt. But if anyone should deny this, our present point would not be affected by the denial. The historic fact would remain, that in the early period at which this writing was given to the world, the very highest claims asserted by and for Christ in the Gospels were acknowledged and set forth fully and systematically.

And the acknowledgment was common to the writer and to those whom he addressed. The argument of



the epistle is not addressed to a people who did not believe its doctrine concerning Christ, but who did believe; not to Ebionites, who held low conceptions of the Messiah as merely human, but to men who, believing as the writer believed, would acknowledge the force of his exhortations to steadfastness in the faith. According to the writer, there was nothing novel in what he taught concerning Christ; it was no departure from an earlier faith. 'Therefore,' these things asserted in Chapter I. being so, 'we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.' Of the 'great salvation' which had been accomplished by so great a Saviour, he says, 'Which, having been first spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His will.' The continuity of the faith from the beginning was complete, and was well attested. This is what we gather from this Epistle or Christian tractate, which, from internal evidence seems to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Heb. ii. 1—4  
(Rev. Ver.).

The earliest non-apostolic writer is Clement of Rome. And in his letter to the Corinthians, written before the close of the first century, 'the dogmatic form of Paulinism is preserved,' as Pfleiderer confesses. 'The modes of expression used in the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews are retained.' Clement accepts emphatically the cardinal Pauline doctrine of justification by faith, and speaks frequently of 'redemption through the blood of Christ.' Of specific errors which are either expressly or allusively com-

Clement of  
Rome.

Pauline.

Hibbert  
Lectures.

bated, the following, Pflleiderer says, may be mentioned: 'a spiritualistic denial of the resurrection, dualistic asceticism, mythological genealogies, *i.e.*, the doctrine of *aeons*; the Marcionite antithesis of Law and Gospel, of a Creator and Redeemer; Gnostic particularism, and a Docetic Christology.' In other words, the errors combated in this famous letter of Clement are the very errors which are combated by Paul and by John! Before the date of Clement's letter, Jesus of Nazareth was regarded as Divine, His mission that of Mediator between God and man, His death an atonement for human guilt, and Himself the object of worship, as we have seen by the Apocalypse, whoever wrote it, and by those letters of Paul which are universally acknowledged to be genuine. And there is no one in Clement's time to challenge these views of Christ and His work, as departures from the truth. On the contrary, they are accepted as 'without controversy,' the original conceptions of the followers of Christ; and strange opinions, the offspring of a heathen philosophy, which, in an incipient form, found their way among Christians even in Paul's time, are combated as anti-Christian. The discovery had not yet been made that Jesus was not what His disciples believed Him to be!

Col. ii.  
8 23.

Justin  
Martyr.

Justin Martyr, who was born at the close of the first century, and who wrote about the middle of the second, quotes in his writings largely from certain books, which he calls 'Memoirs of the Apostles,' which he describes as having been written by 'Apostles and the companions of Apostles;' and which he says were read along with the prophets at the meetings of the Christians. The question has been keenly de-

'Memoirs  
of the  
Apostles.'

bated whether these 'Memoirs' are our extant Gospels or not. It is certain that Justin's description of them corresponds with these Gospels — written by two Apostles and two companions of Apostles. It is certain, likewise, that his quotations agree *substantially* with passages in the Gospels. That our Gospels are those which were in the hands of Irenæus about A.D. 170 or 175 is certain, from his description of them and of their authors. And 'it would require some degree of credulity to believe that all the churches everywhere did, between the years 150 and 175, *change* the Gospels which they read publicly every Lord's-day.' But let us suppose that the identity of our Gospels and of the 'Memoirs' quoted by Justin is not proved, and that these 'Memoirs' consequently were of earlier date—what follows? What manner of Christ did Justin find in those alleged earlier histories of the Prophet of Nazareth—the earliest, perhaps, of all, but of whose contents we know nothing, except through the pages of Justin? Was He a Christ such as is pictured by those who say that He could have been only a man, though a very wise and good man, a great religious genius, or such a Christ as we find pictured in the pages of Matthew and John? Happily, the answer cannot be doubted. Whether the 'Memoirs' in the hands of Justin and the Gospels in the hands of Irenæus and in ours are the same or not, *the Christ of the two sets of books is the same*. What our Gospels tell us of the Incarnation, Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Justin found in his 'Memoirs.' So that the cause of those who reject the supernatural in Christ and His work, gains nothing by setting aside the books which bear the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. *The conclusion from*

Our  
Gospels.

But if not—  
What then?

*their own premises is that there were older histories than our Gospels, which represented the Founder of Christianity in the same supernatural lights in which He appears in the later books. And thus our judgment is confirmed that those extraordinary claims which Christ asserted are not the accretions of a later age.*

The Alogi  
and the  
Ebionites.

John i. 11.

The names of the 'Alogi' and the 'Ebionites' are sometimes invoked in aid of the theory that the 'primitive' faith respecting Christ was purely 'Humanitarian.' The true inference from what we know of these sects is just the opposite. The 'Alogi,' as their name indicates, denied the *logos* of the fourth Gospel and the doctrine of the Incarnation. And on this *a priori* ground, not for historic reasons, they rejected all the writings ascribed to the Apostle John. But their history is altogether so obscure that Lardner goes so far as to call the heresy of the 'Alogi' fictitious. And it is certain that whatever exception they took to those Christian Scriptures which set forth the personal glory of Christ, it was on 'dogmatic' grounds, and not because of any doubt respecting the Apostolic origin of these Scriptures. The same remark applies to the Ebionites, the extreme section of which, at least, regarded Jesus as a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary. Their history, like that of the Alogi, is obscure, but they were probably the spiritual descendants of those Judaisers against whom Paul raised his voice as endangering the safety of the church at Colosse, by speculations which derogated from the true Divinity of Jesus Christ. The Ebionites rejected with equal impartiality St. Peter and St. Paul, the three Gospels as well as the fourth, and had a Gospel of their own, which is believed to have been a mutilated form of

the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Among the 'heretics' who arose in the second and third centuries, there was scarcely one that claimed Apostolic 'tradition' in his favour; while their occurrence, and the controversies to which they gave rise, illustrate the unanimity, as we venture to call it, with which the Christian churches of those ages accepted the 'supernatural' version of Christ's person and claims, as that which had been received historically from the first preachers of the faith.



PART FOURTH.

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SOME NATURALISTIC HYPOTHESES  
CONSIDERED.





## NATURALISTIC HYPOTHESES.

We have now to examine some hypotheses by which it is attempted to neutralise all this evidence.

1. Hypotheses which require *the supposition of some degree of conscious dishonesty on the part of Christ* might be met with scorn rather than with argument. No writer, worthy of any consideration, will now venture to maintain what has been well called 'the frivolous and morally revolting theory' which accused either Christ Himself, or the Gospel writers, of lying and fraud. 'This theory is condemned by a single question (says Christlieb): How can He from whom the moral regeneration of the world proceeded have been an immoral deceiver? Or, how could it be conceived as possible that a number of fraudulent men should be able to invent the purest, grandest, and most exalted character, the mere idea of which far transcends the loveliest visions of poets, and the noblest aspirations of philosophers?' I may ask again what I have already asked in substance: How could one who was conscious of deliberate fraud and imposture from first to last, not only profess but sustain that character, extraordinary, apparently at least, for moral grandeur and purity, without a word or act or look that should betray its shallowness? If there be such a thing as a moral impossibility, we have it here. But it is not necessary to deal seriously with this 'most clumsy

Conscious  
dishonesty.

'Modern  
doubt and  
Christian  
belief.'

A moral im-  
possibility.

method' of accounting for the self-asserted claims of Jesus Christ.

Some  
taint of  
unreality.

In the older  
Rationalism

In the  
mythical  
theory.

Mythical  
theory  
abandoned.

Fragments  
of it.

Conscious  
untruth.

It so happens, however, that other theories which have been framed to account for these claims, without admitting their absolute truth, have to fall back on the supposition of *some degree*, some taint, of conscious unreality—conscious, even if involuntary, yielding to the necessities of circumstances, in the mind of Jesus. When a theory fails or is insufficient to account for the facts, its deficiency has to be eked out, and its weakness supported, by explanations which imply an element of dishonesty in His procedure. It was so in a very large measure in the old naturalistic interpretation, which saw only natural, though extraordinary, occurrences in the reputed miracles of Jesus. It was so, less obtrusively, in the mythical theory of Strauss, which was invented to preserve the credit of Jesus Christ, and to find a spiritual essence in His religion which should be independent of the supernatural envelope in which it has come down to us. The element of dishonesty became again more prominent when the mythical theory was proved by men, as sceptical as Strauss himself, to be untenable, in parts baseless, and in parts inadequate to the explanation of acknowledged facts. Strauss, it is well known, himself ceased to hold his original theory in its integrity, and took up a position of relentless opposition to Christ, on the ground of an absolute materialism and Pantheism. But fragments of his theory re-appear in forms and combinations which it is difficult to classify, and which vary, with all the suddenness of the kaleidoscope, in the hands of every new critic. Only they have this in common, that at some point or other they find an element of conscious untruth necessary to give validity

to their argument; and yet, for the most part, they are lavish in their admiration of Jesus Christ and His Divine idea. Now, my argument is this: that this element of conscious untruth is fatal to any theory which adopts it; that it is as the clay mixed with the iron in the royal dream, rendering it impossible for the parts to cohere, and sure to cause it to fall to pieces when smitten by the stone of truth. But to make this clear an example may be necessary.

Christianity has a glorious origin, we are assured by Renan. The high conception of divinity which Jesus attained He did not owe to Judaism, it was in all parts the creation of His own great mind—and this conception was the source of all His power. He was the Author of a great revolution in Judaism, but He was distinguished from the agitators of His time, and those of all ages, by His perfect idealism. ‘The idea of being all-powerful by suffering and resignation, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart, is indeed (we are told) an idea peculiar to Jesus.’ And now, eighteen hundred years and more after His appearance among men, ‘His perfect idealism is the highest rule of the unblemished and virtuous life. He has created the heaven of pure souls, where is found what we ask for in vain on earth, the perfect nobility of the children of God, absolute purity, the total removal of the stains of the world; in fine, liberty, which society excludes as an impossibility, and which exists in all its amplitude only in the domain of thought. The great Master of those who take refuge in this ideal Kingdom of God is still Jesus. He was the first to proclaim the royalty of the mind; the first to say, at least by His actions, My Kingdom is not of this world. The foundation of true religion is indeed His work: after

But lavish  
in praise of  
Jesus.

An example  
—Renan.

Renan on  
glorious  
origin of  
Christianity

Him all that remains is to develop it and render it fruitful.'

Natural  
inference.

The natural inference from all this must be that Jesus of Nazareth, full of the idea of being all-powerful by suffering, and of triumphing over force by purity of heart, after whom nothing remains but to develop His religion of absolute purity to render it fruitful, must Himself have been consciously pure and honest, and prepared to brave all risks to Himself and to His Kingdom, which purity and honesty might demand. Jesus Himself asked, 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' believing that every seed produces after its kind. But there are some who, rejecting on some pretence or other all the miracles wrought by Christ, believe in this otherwise unheard-of miracle—the origination of a gloriously pure religion in a mind that was consciously dishonest, and the establishment of it in the hearts of His disciples by consciously dishonest means. I hesitate to quote the terms in which this miraculous process is described, but I cannot venture to epitomise them, or to translate them into words of my own.

Inconsis-  
tency of  
Renan.

Renan says, 'The Jesus who founded the true Kingdom of God, the kingdom of the meek and humble, was the Jesus of early life—of those chaste and pure days when the voice of His Father re-echoed within Him in clearer tones. It was then, for some months, perhaps a year, that God truly dwelt on the earth.' 'As yet there were no Christians; though Christianity was founded, and, doubtless, it was never more perfect than at this early period. Jesus added to it nothing durable afterwards. Indeed, in one sense, He compromised it; for every movement, in order to

triumph, must make sacrifices; we never come from the contest of life unscathed. To conceive the good, in fact, is not sufficient; it must be made to succeed among men. To accomplish this, less pure paths must be followed. Certainly, if the Gospel was confined to some chapters of Matthew and Luke, it would be more perfect, and would not now be open to so many objections; but would Jesus have converted the world without miracles? If He had died at the period of His career we have now reached, there would not have been in His life a single page of wonders; but, greater in the eyes of God, he would have remained unknown to men; He would have been lost in the crowd of great unknown spirits, Himself the greatest of all; the truth would not have been promulgated and the world would not have profited from the great moral superiority with which His Father had endowed Him.' 'Sometimes Jesus employed an innocent artifice, which Joan of Arc also used. Concealing the true source of His strength—His superiority over all that surrounded Him—He permitted people to believe that a revelation revealed to Him all secrets and laid bare all hearts. It was thus that He attracted Nathanael, Peter, and the Samaritan woman.' Speaking of His last days, the same writer says that 'His natural gentleness seemed to have abandoned Him; He was sometimes harsh and capricious.' But 'it was not that His virtue deteriorated; but His struggle for the ideal against the reality became insupportable. Contact with the world pained and revolted Him; obstacles irritated Him. His idea of the Son of God became confused and exaggerated. The fatal flaw which condemns an idea to decay as soon as it seeks to convert man, applied to Him. Contact with man degraded Him to

Gros-  
charge.

their level. The tone He had adopted could not be sustained more than a few months; it was time that death came to liberate Him from an endurance strained to the utmost, to remove Him from the impossibilities of an interminable path, and by delivering Him from a trial in danger of being too long prolonged, introduce Him henceforth sinless into celestial peace.'

To be  
repelled  
with  
indignation

What shall we say to these things, which it is difficult to read without indignation? Is it necessary to expose the manifold contradictions of Renan's *dicta* respecting Christ and His mission? We are to suppose that a young Nazarene, a carpenter, self-educated, self-constituted a Rabbi, rose by some unknown means to a moral elevation which no man had ever before attained, became more 'divine,' more 'full of God,' than any man before Him ever had been; that 'neither directly nor indirectly did any element of Greek culture reach Him;' that as little did He owe what He was and felt to Judaism; that He was filled with the idea of regenerating the world, and that entirely by moral means; and that, not concealing from Himself the terrible storm He was about to cause in the world, the grandeur of His views upon the future was at times surprising. *But*—the high tone which He thus attained could be sustained only for a few months! The 'new spirit' which He was to infuse into humanity, which was to renew all nations, and which was to triumph over all opposition, could not bear contact in His own person with the world for more than a few months, without being 'degraded to the level' of men around Him! And, 'now He was no longer free; He belonged to His mission and man-

Moral  
incred-  
ibilities.

kind.' He must use means alien from the spirit of the Kingdom which He was founding, to secure the success of that Kingdom! He must employ 'artifice,' and pretend to an omniscience which did not belong to Him! He must seem to work miracles which He did not work! And it was thus that He won to the rank of His followers devout men like Nathanael, and honest men like Peter! All which amounts to this, that He cast out Satan by Satan; and what He refused to do when tempted in the wilderness, He did before many months had gone by—He fell down and worshipped the Prince of lies, that the Prince of *lies* might lend Him the aid without which the kingdom of *truth* could not be established!

We have been accustomed to regard the title assumed by the institution of Ignatius Loyola, 'The Society of Jesus,' as an insult to the holy name of the Founder of our faith. But if this version of the personal work of Christ in the world be correct, no designation could be more appropriate. Jesus must Himself be regarded as the exemplar of those who think it right to do evil that good may come. And yet one wonders that His immediate and first followers did not learn the lesson, which, if He did not teach, we are to suppose that He practised. One of them, the most intimate and the most loved, says that in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil—'Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God': 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' 'And for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.' Who can imagine the indignation with which John would have resented the merest suggestion, that his Holy Master had descended from the high level of Divine

No  
Jesuitism.

Of God or of  
the devil?  
I. John iii.  
8—10.

Peter on  
guile.  
I. Peter ii.  
1—21.

Paul on  
dishonesty.  
II. Cor. iv.  
1—2.

Rom. iii. 8.

No evil in  
order to  
good.

righteousness and truth, and had used the devil's weapons to destroy the works of the devil! Another of Christ's immediate followers, that Peter, who, we are told, was won by an artifice, was so little conscious of the means by which he was won, that he solemnly charged the followers of Christ to put away all guile and hypocrisies, and to follow the steps of Christ, who did no sin, neither was any guile found in His mouth. The Apostle Paul, who, though not an immediate, was a first, follower of Christ, says of himself and other servants of the Lord, that seeing they had been charged with the Christian ministry, they 'fainted not' in the face of difficulty and opposition, but 'renounced the hidden things of dishonesty,'—all secret and dishonourable craft, and by manifestation of the truth, pure from all alloy, commended themselves to men's consciences in the sight of God. And yet we are to believe that Paul's Master, who, we must repeat, in the language of our critic, had more of the Divine in Him than Paul, fainted in His work after a few months' experience of it, and condescended to use 'dishonest' expedients. The same Apostle, in another letter, speaks of the allegation that in advocating the doctrine of a free justification of the sinner, He sanctioned the maxim, 'Let us do evil that good may come,' as calumny against Him and blasphemy against God, and says with emphasis that the condemnation of those who hold this maxim is just. And yet we are to believe that Paul's Master—but I will not pursue the argument. The theory which involves such a consequence is self-condemned. Its logic is bad enough; its morality is worse. The Society which calls itself 'of Jesus' is not of Jesus. Its fundamental principles are in utmost contrariety to Him



who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.

Were it necessary further to argue the untenableness of the theory which requires the assumption of conscious dishonesty on the part of Jesus Christ, I need only say in brief—(1) That the mode in which Renan treats the history of Christ—and his mode is substantially that of others of the same school—accepting or rejecting as it best suits his purpose, is irrational and arbitrary. It is guided by no principle but the necessity of accounting for everything without admitting the one thing which Christ Himself made most essential, His claim to be received as more than a prophet, the very Son of God, the Saviour of men. (2) The character imagined by Renan is an utter moral impossibility—a character of the highest possible purity and elevation, but suffering corruption through a few months' conflict with the world; and yet, while thus corrupted (or to use his word, 'degraded'), still retaining its high aims, and prosecuting its great mission of regeneration by a 'compromise' with the world's falsehood. We are familiar with mixed characters, with the imperfections of great men, and with instances in which the good have been tempted to enter into compromise with evil. But here is a man, not merely of superlative goodness, but literally singularly alone in his character, without compeer, attaining 'the first rank in the family of the Sons of God,' moved by the 'Divine' which is in Him to essay the great task of infusing a 'new spirit' into mankind, yet falling beneath the power of the evil against which He had undertaken His holy war, and, while thus fallen, still remaining the same mysteriously 'Divine' person He had ever been. Fiction startles us with

Renan's  
mode  
irrational  
and  
arbitrary.

No such  
character  
possible.

Mixed  
characters.

Christ's  
not mixed.

False  
apologies.

many incongruities of character, but the incongruity here is unique. We are accustomed to speak of Christ as the greatest Miracle of Christianity. But we may henceforth attach a new meaning to these words. The Christ which is compounded and moulded by the hands of Renan *is* a great miracle, or rather a great prodigy, but it is one before which we can no longer bow down in adoring wonder and love. (3) The apologies which men of this school offer for what is plainly untruthful and unrighteous, are sufficient to condemn their theory. 'Every movement in order to triumph must make sacrifices'—moral sacrifices, it is meant. 'To conceive the good is not sufficient; it must be made to succeed amongst men. To accomplish this, less pure paths must be followed.' Without waiting to remark on the self-contradiction of these statements—for it is not the good that triumphs when impure means are employed, but the evil—who does not see that the merest suggestion to employ falsehood or hypocrisy to promote His mission would have provoked from Christ an immediate and indignant 'Get thee behind me, Satan'? Instead of rendering the following of Him easy by smooth words and promises, Jesus threw obstacles in the way of men coming to Him and following Him, which nothing but the strongest moral purpose on their part could overcome. And thus it was that He educated His disciples to be of one mind with Himself, and prepared not to count life dear to them in the service of the right. There was nothing that drew from His gracious lips words of severer condemnation than hypocrisy. And those who charge Him with hypocrisy, and then apologise for it as a necessity of His position, expose themselves to a 'Woe, Woe,' more intensely severe than any which

Christ  
condemns  
hypocrisy.

made Scribes and Pharisees tremble of old. (4) The only quasi-historic ground for ascribing some degree of moral obliquity to Christ in the later part of His ministry, is the assumption that it was only then He put forth those extraordinary claims which we are now considering. It is assumed that in the beginning of His ministry His pretension did not extend beyond that of a wise teacher, and that He was 'carried away by the fearful progression of the enthusiasm' which He had excited; that He became entangled in the meshes of the homage which was paid to Him, and thus came to think of Himself more highly than He ought to think. Apart from our moral revulsion from such a theory, the assumption is historically untrue. We have seen how that when He was only twelve years old He used words which indicated a peculiar relation to God, 'Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?' or, 'Wist ye not that I should be in My Father's house?' And we have seen that in His very earliest gathering of disciples He allowed one of them to say to Him, 'Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel.' That He taught His disciples as they were able to bear it, and that, as the time drew nigh when 'He should be received up,' He spoke to them more fully of Himself and His relation to the Father, we know. But in this we see only His wisdom. His last assertion of Himself was so solemn, and made in such solemn circumstances, as we have seen, that neither our reason nor our moral sense will allow us to imagine it to have been the climax of a course of 'compromise,' into which He had been driven by his own enthusiasm and the demands of the people. Those who can hear Jesus reply to the adjuration of the High Priest to say whether He was the Son of God,

Untrue  
assumption.

John i. 49.

Matt. xxvi.  
63—66.  
Luke xxii.  
66—71.

Jesus on  
His oath.

'I am, and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven,' and suppose that He was in any way deceived or deceiving, must believe either that He was at the moment literally and absolutely 'beside Himself,' or—but I will not put the alternative in words, the very supposition is too painful for any one who retains the least reverence for the name of Christ.

Not self-deceived.

It cannot be gravely maintained that Jesus of Nazareth was from the first self-deceived—self-deceived by His moral enthusiasm into the notion that He was the long expected Messiah. The result is proof to the contrary. Self-deception could not have made Him the glorious personage He is universally confessed to have been. Renan himself says, 'It has not yet been given to insanity to influence seriously the progress of humanity.' We may say the same of self-deception, if indeed such self-deception as is supposed in this case be not insanity. Christ's relation to the Messianic ideas of His time, on the one hand, and His relation to the Messianic ideas of the prophets on the other hand, have been already set forth. And it may be concluded with a confidence which cannot be shaken, that the idea of self-deception utterly fails to explain the position which He assumed and sustained throughout His ministry.

Admission of Renan.

Imposture involved in the 'Tubingen theory'.

It should be remarked that the boasted and boastful Tubingen theory involves in it a charge of wholesale imposture, not indeed against Christ personally, but against those later followers of His, to whom we are supposed to owe the final victory of the universalism of Paul over the particularism and narrowness of

Judaism as represented by other Apostles. The theory is based, we have to repeat, on the allegation of a radical difference in doctrine between Peter and the Jerusalem Christians on the one hand, and Paul and his followers on the other. Hence there grew up two antagonistic types of Christianity, two divisions of the Church, separate and unfriendly to each other. Such was the state of things at the end of the apostolic age. Then followed attempts to reconcile the difference and to bridge the gulf which separated Gentile from Jewish Pauline from Petrine Christianity. To this end, various *irenical and compromising books were written in the name of the Apostles and their helpers*. In plainer words, certain books which now form part of the New Testament were written after the days of the Apostles, and published as the works of Apostles and apostolic men who had not written them:—This evil being done, these forgeries being perpetrated, that good might come, that is, that the divisions of the Christian Church might be healed! And some books which probably bear the names of their true authors, aiming at the same end, sought it by untruthful means! A brief specimen of the criticism based on these assumptions will suffice for the present purpose.

There is very much, Pfleiderer says, to be said in favour of ascribing the second Gospel to Mark as a disciple of Paul, not of Peter, ‘for it exhibits plainly various traces of Pauline influences and reminiscences.’ ‘It is specially indicative of the Pauline Evangelist, that he takes the very words which Paul had used in his Epistle to the Romans, of the obduracy of the unbelieving Jews generally, and puts them into the mouth of Jesus as He complains of the want of faith and understanding displayed by His disciples, whom

Books  
under false  
names.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 171, &c.

Rom. ix. 33.  
xi. 8.  
Mark iv.  
11—12.

Mark viii.  
17—18.  
ix, 19.

Absurd  
misinter-  
pretation.

Mark ix. 5.

II. Cor. iii.  
14.

Mark ix.  
17—18.  
vv. 38—40.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 177.

the Evangelist is never weary of placing, whenever an occasion occurs, in the most unfavourable light imaginable—the object of Mark not being to tell the plain truth, but to exalt Paul and to depreciate his brother Apostles! The story of the Transfiguration ‘is an idealistic narrative for which the Apocalypse and the Pauline Christology have supplied the elements.’ Peter wishes to build three tabernacles for the permanent abode of Moses, Elias, and Christ. That is, he desires to see the transient and the permanent, the old and the new, the letter and the spirit, associated for all time—he knew not what he said: for they were sore afraid, and a cloud overshadowed them. In this you have the allegorical illustration of the utterance of Paul, ‘their minds were hardened, for unto this very day the same veil lieth over the reading of the Old Testament, it not being revealed that it is done away in Christ.’ Descending from the Mount the disciples could not cast out a demon, whereas one who did not follow them was able to cast out demons. ‘Thus (says Pfeiderer) the Pauline Evangelist makes Jesus Himself the apologist of the greatly reviled Apostle Paul, who, though the last of the Apostles, had yet laboured more abundantly than all the rest; who, notwithstanding their intercourse with Jesus, of which they boasted to Paul’s disadvantage, were censured by Jesus Himself as a faithless generation, with hardened hearts and blinded eyes. This was the Pauline reply, to the glorification of the Twelve in the Apocalypse, at the cost of the Apostle to the Heathen!’

If the friends of Paul might thus resort to invention, daring to put words into the lips of Christ which He never uttered, his enemies, the friends of the older

Apostles, could do the same. And 'Jewish Christianity, thus attacked [in the Gospel by Mark] with weapons from the arsenal of Gospel tradition, made its reply in the Gospel by Matthew.' 'At the very beginning of the lengthy Sermon on the Mount, to which is assigned so prominent a position as the programme of the labours of Jesus, the Evangelist inserts into the materials before him a few sentences which contain unmistakably (!) an allusion to the Apostle Paul: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called the *least* in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." These solemn words in the end of the Sermon on the Mount are not Christ's words, but an invention to destroy the influence and authority of Paul! 'In the highest degree characteristic . . . is the turn which the Jewish-Christian Gospel has given to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus is made (!) to say, "Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, cast out devils, and done many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from Me ye that work *lawlessness*.'" 'We hear in these words plainly (says the Hibbert lecturer) the judgment of a legalistic Jewish Christian upon those Paulinists who call Jesus their Lord, are accustomed to speak of Him in exalted language, and perform miracles also in His name, but who will, notwithstanding all that, not be acknowledged by the Messiah as His followers, for the reason that they work *lawlessness*.' But if the author of the first Gospel could thus cleverly invent a protest against Paul and put it into the lips of Christ Himself, the

Pfleiderer,  
p. 178.

Matt. v. 19.

Pfleiderer,  
p. 180.

Critical  
folly.

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 181.

Imaginary  
conflicts  
between the  
Gospels.

author of the third Gospel was not behind him in inventiveness and in courage. He turns this Jewish Anti-Pauline saying into one of a Pauline Anti-Jewish character. He substitutes the word *ἀδικία*, injustice, for *ἀνομία*, lawlessness, and thus directs the saying against the Jews, who will one day appeal to having eaten and drunk in the presence of Jesus, and to His having taught in their streets, but, notwithstanding, shall be told by Him to depart as doers, not of *lawlessness*, but of iniquity, and shall break forth into weeping when they see people coming from the east and west, and north and south, and sitting down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, while themselves are shut out! The Sermon on the Mount, instead of being the utterance of Christ in part at least, is turned into a shuttlecock for a clever game between contending parties, a game in which truth is of no account, and solemn foretellings of the Great Judgment are invented in the interests of party and audaciously put into the lips of Him who was 'the Truth.'

Tubingen  
theory see f.  
condemned.

The theory which necessitates or adapts such interpretations as these, of the Gospels and their contents, will be regarded by most readers as self-condemned. It is difficult to suppose that Pfeiderer was not conscious that he had reached a *reductio ad absurdum*, when he discovered, or followed in the wake of those who thought they had discovered, the hand of an anti-Paul forger in some of the most remarkable sayings of Christ, and the hand of a pro-Paul forger in another version of them. And one wonders that when their conclusions are calmly surveyed by such critics, they do not, like Fear in Collins's ode, 'back recoil even at the sound themselves have made.' How a warfare carried on, as the warfare between Jewish and Gentile



Christianity is alleged to have been, by forged and poisoned weapons, could become an irenicum, and issue in a reconciliation, it is difficult to see. And it is with the relief which one feels when he emerges from a fog into sunshine, that we turn to the Gospels themselves. They are their own witness, written with artless simplicity, by men who, we may say, were not capable of the hidden and profound strategy of opposing warriors, and who, without regard to their own fame or that of others, cared only to tell the truth concerning their Lord and Master. If their representations of Him and of His words and deeds, are to be rejected or questioned, it must not be on the ground of dishonesty or evil intention.

2. The second hypothesis, or rather class of hypotheses, by which it is sought to account for the personal claims said to have been asserted by Jesus Christ, is that which supposes that these claims, and the miracles which accompany them, are *the accretions of a later age*—in fact, *that Christ did not utter the words, and did not perform the works, that are ascribed to Him*, and that the many tales of strange words, and strange works, found in the Gospels, sprang up at a later period, one scarcely knows how. The argument against this hypothesis has been anticipated. It has been shown that the supernatural aspects of Christ's person and work can be traced to Peter and John as well as to Paul, at a date within three or five years of the death of Christ, so that there was nothing left for a later age to add to them. We insist on this as a historic fact, a rock on which all hypotheses of later accretions are shattered. But still we hear of myths and legends and superstitions, which, with the

aid probably of some cunning and imposture, produced, as by magic, or as by a superhuman instinct, the wonderfully beautiful character which all recognise in the grand hero of the Gospels. When the carpenter of Nazareth proclaimed those moral maxims, which, through the form into which He cast them, and the spirit which He breathed into them, 'were to regenerate the world,' we are told by one author, 'it was only one Rabbi more (it is true the most charming of all), and around Him some young men, eager to hear Him, and thirsting for knowledge.' 'We shall probably never be able,' says another, 'to determine how far the Great Teacher may, through His own speculations, or misunderstood spiritual utterances, have originated the supernatural doctrines subsequently attributed to Him, and by which His whole history soon became suffused. There can be little doubt [such is the Rationalist assumption] that in great part the miraculous elements of Christianity are due to the profound and excited veneration of un-instructed and superstitious ages, for the elevated character of Jesus. The history of the world is not without instances of similar phenomena, but as a slight illustration of the tendency we may, in passing, merely point to the case of the excited and superstitious populace of Lystra, who, with less reason, are described as hailing Paul and Barnabas as gods. Whatever explanation may be given, however, it is undeniable (?) that the earliest teaching of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, which can be regarded in any sense as historical, is pure morality, almost, if not quite, free from theological dogmas. Morality was the essence of this system; theology was an afterthought. It is to the followers of Jesus, and not to the Master Himself, that

The Author  
of 'Super-  
natural  
Religion.'

Rationalist  
assumpt on

At Lystra.

we owe the supernatural elements so characteristic of the age and people. *Before His first followers had passed away, intricate systems of dogma and mysticism began to prevail.* The disciples who had so often misunderstood the teaching of Jesus during His life, piously distorted it after His death.'

This is a favourable specimen of the way in which those who will not believe in the 'supernatural' under any conditions, represent the 'beginnings' of Christianity. Jesus did not—could not—have wrought miracles; Jesus did not—could not—have professed Himself to be the Son of God. The idea that He did or could is not to be entertained for a moment; *therefore*, whatever is supernatural in the story of His life, *must be* the product of a later period! Strauss's last way of it is more consistent; 'From knowing little of Jesus,' he says in effect, 'we have advanced till we know nothing; to pretend to know anything carries us back to the old orthodox position which claims to know everything.' That is, receive the moral teaching of Christ on the authority of the Gospels, and you must receive all His teaching on the same authority, and therefore we had better receive neither, and know nothing! It is not merely that the natural and supernatural elements of Christ's life are inextricably interwoven in the narratives, but that even His moral teaching has Himself for its centre. In the Sermon on the Mount, for example, He is, as we have already shown, as supernatural as when He commands the winds and the waves into a great calm. And yet we cannot accept Strauss's position. We cannot pretend to know nothing about Jesus Christ. We know much. The world has felt His power and feels it now, and

Baseless  
*a priori.*

All or none  
of His  
teaching.

Strauss's  
'know  
nothing.'

cannot be persuaded that it knows not who and what He was.

Fragments  
of the old  
mythical.

It is not necessary that I should discuss the purely mythical theory, according to which all that is supernatural in the Gospels grew up by slow degrees, without conscious or dishonest intention on the part of individuals—in some such way as the mythology of ancient nations may be supposed to have grown—for the author of this theory has, as one of his countrymen has expressed it, ended, Saturn-like, by devouring his own offspring. Nor is it necessary that I should formally discuss theories which have picked up fragments of the old ‘mythical,’ and which intermix legends, superstitions, pious distortions, frauds, as occasion may require.

Acts xiv. 14.

True  
inference  
from the  
Lystra  
incident.

Acts xiv. 15.  
iv. 24.

The illustration which we have quoted from the author of ‘Supernatural Religion’ of the tendency to magnify men into gods, tells clearly against his own theory. The superstitious populace of Lystra did hail Paul and Barnabas as gods, but Paul and Barnabas rejected with horror the worship which the people would have offered. Rending their clothes, and rushing in among the multitude, they declared that their mission was to turn men from such vanities to serve the living God. Now it is in Paul and Barnabas, not in the populace of Lystra, that we find the type and spirit of the Christians of the first age. Instead of the superstition which would magnify men into gods, either unintentionally or by ‘pious distortion,’ the Christian spirit was religiously and intensely jealous of the exclusive glory of Him whom Paul and Barnabas, after the example of earlier disciples, described as ‘the Living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein.’

The apostolic missionaries of the primitive church did not overthrow the idols of the Roman empire by exalting another idol in their stead, in the person of Jesus Christ, but by revealing the 'Living God,' as manifested to men in Jesus Christ, in whom, and by whom, men found redemption from guilt and sin.

There is one admission made in the passage I have quoted which may be used as an introduction to some further discussion of hypotheses which would assign all that is supernatural in Christ's claims to a period or age subsequent to Christ's own ministry. 'Before His first followers had passed away, intricate systems of dogma and mysticism began to prevail. *The disciples who had so often misunderstood the teaching of Jesus during His life, piously distorted it after His death.*' The misunderstanding of Christ's teaching by His disciples, we may remark in passing, was always in the direction of the unspiritual and temporal, not in the direction of the transcendental and supernatural. But the important fact admitted is that what this author calls 'intricate systems of dogma and mysticism' began to prevail 'before Christ's first followers had passed away.' It did not then require 'the profound and excited veneration of uninstructed and ignorant *ages*,' as our author implies in an earlier sentence, to produce 'the miraculous elements of Christianity.' These elements are, by his own admission, traceable historically to the lifetime of Christ's personal followers. The ascription of them to 'pious distortion,'—the 'pious distorters' being no other than such personal followers as Peter and John, and such others as Paul—is one of those illogical artifices by which a weak argument is helped into some degree of plausibility.

Christ's  
first  
followers.

Their  
misunder-  
standing—  
what ?

The first  
Christian  
age super-  
stitious.

3. Some content themselves with saying that *the first Christian age was superstitious*; and, saying this, they pass by superciliously and account themselves very wise. Some are bold enough to insist that the age was so utterly dark, ignorant, and superstitious, that it were sheer folly to accept its evidence in support of the supernatural. Even 'the Apostles and the Evangelists,' says one, 'were men of like passions, and also of like superstitions with others of their time, and must be measured by the same standard.'

The evidence which is used to prove the superstitiousness of the age is not all relevant. The Book of Tobit, for example, written, according to Ewald, 350 years before Christ, is appealed to—as if a book written in the reign of Henry VIII. could prove the state of England in the reign of Victoria! The appeal to the 'Book of Enoch' is more legitimate, because it may be regarded as nearly contemporaneous with the time of Christ, whether before or after. But what needs to be proved is that the fables and fancies of this book reflected popular superstition.

The existence of superstition or superstitiousness, however, all over the world in the time of Christ, need not be denied. What is overlooked or forgotten is that the age was as distinguished for its scepticism as for its superstition. 'It was an age in which men, disgusted with the old superstitions, the hollowness and absurdity of which they had discovered, were rather ready in too many instances to reject the supernatural altogether.' In the contemporaneousness of superstition and scepticism there is nothing strange; they are often found in the same person.

Turning to the Gospels we find more evidence of scepticism than of credulity. Christ's miracles were

Sceptical  
as well as  
supersti-  
tious.

witnessed and scanned by the most hostile eyes. The Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots, whose character in Josephus accords entirely with their character in the Gospels, all opposed Him resolutely, but on separate grounds peculiar to each sect; and they would have exulted in the discovery of any flaw in His words and works. But such flaw was never found. This has an obvious bearing on the question whether the superstition and ignorance of the age was such as to discredit any evidence that can be furnished of the performance of genuine miracles by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was surrounded everywhere by sharp-sighted and malicious enemies, and nowhere by any class who were predisposed by superstition or otherwise to admit His claims, and to follow Him. So that if there be positive evidence that He wrought miracles, the character of the age forms no reason why we should not listen.

More than this—the darker you make your picture of the age—the more you insist on the ‘dense ignorance and superstition of the mass of the Jews,’ and even ‘of the most educated and intelligent part of the community’—the more manifest you make it that neither Jesus, nor the Gospel narratives of His life, are the fruits of the spirit of their age. Great men are usually regarded as representative men, embodying in a visible form, and proclaiming in an audible tone, the instincts and aspirations, which are semi-dormant in the hearts of the noblest and best of their epoch. ‘Hence their history is a glass in which humanity finds itself reflected; it is the echo of the world’s voice.’ But Jesus Christ did not reflect the humanity of His age, and did not echo its voice, not even that of the ‘noblest and best’ of its people. ‘He was a

J. S. Mill on  
Christ.

unique figure,' as Mr. John Stuart Mill acknowledges; 'not more unlike all His precursors than all His followers, even those who had the direct benefit of His teaching.' Whence this unique figure in the history of mankind? this embodiment of an 'ideal excellence,' which Mr. Mill cannot find either in the 'God of the Jews,' or in the 'God of Nature?' He existed in a dark and superstitious age—did that dark and superstitious age produce Him? What concurrence of moral atoms can account for this most supernatural phenomenon? Is it not itself 'a sign and a wonder' transcending the giving of sight to the blind, or even the raising of the dead? Signs such as the latter have been wrought, or are said to have been wrought, by other men divinely endowed, but imagination itself has not surrounded a second name with the halo of perfection and sinlessness. And yet He belonged to a dark and superstitious age.

Now as to the narrative of His life. If the age furnished witnesses who were capable of giving us the picture of this wonderful character—capable of bearing testimony to *Himself*—why, notwithstanding anything that can be said of its superstitiousness, should it not be capable of furnishing witnesses capable of bearing testimony to His *works*? It required less understanding and penetration to appreciate and narrate works which were visible to the eye, than so to appreciate the profoundly spiritual, and, in a sense which all would admit, divine character of Jesus, as to be able to convey to us the impression of its 'unparalleled elevation and purity.' And the age which, by whatever means, has preserved to us the precious legacy of the knowledge of that character, could by the same means preserve to us, untainted by superstition, the know-



ledge of any outward facts in which it manifested itself to mankind. It is admitted by a strenuous anti-supernatural writer that 'the religious feeling which influenced the composition of the Scripture narratives of miracles, naturally led to the exclusion of all that was puerile and ignoble in the traditions preserved respecting the Great Master.' This admission is itself sufficient answer to the charge of superstition. Superstition would have surrounded the miracles, as mythological miracles always are surrounded, with the puerile and ignoble. Those who handed down the story of Christ were *not*, it is evident, 'incurably incapacitated' for being witnesses of the purest and noblest life ever lived. But they were incapable of inventing or imagining the majesty and beauty of that life. And the only sufficient explanation of the Gospels is their own: 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.'

'The puerile and ignoble' excluded.

The question returns and must be urged: If it is to the superstition of the age we owe the supernatural in the person of Christ and in the reported doings of Christ, is it to the same superstition we owe the glorious character of Christ, the wonder of believers not more than of unbelievers, and that perfect and final development of morality which we find in the teaching of Jesus Christ? \* Has the Divinest purity been born of the uttermost human corruption? Have the loftiest

The character of Christ—born of superstition?

Or His ethics.

\* 'For three decades,' says Professor Delitzsch, 'I have busied myself with the history and literature of the people from among whom Christ sprang, and I am ever more and more convinced that the connection of His times with the circumstances of His life will never explain that which He was and that which He became to the world.'—'Jewish Artisan Life.'

ethics possible for man been begotten of grovelling superstition? Or, if it be held that the supernatural in the primitive conception of Christ and His work may be eliminated from the Gospels and still leave us the Divine character without the Divine Person, and the superhuman morals without the superhuman authority, how comes it that the pure and the impure, the enlightened and the superstitious, flow together, as the Arve and the Rhone do for a short distance, without intermingling? But, in fact, they do not thus flow together side by side, clearly distinguishable like these rivers. From the very first, from what we may call the point of junction, they are completely intermingled—the natural and the supernatural become one. You may reject the whole, but there is no process by which you can separate them.

‘Moral Christianity’ from superstition.

Nor could even the ‘Moral Christianity,’ which is extolled by unbelievers at the cost of the supernatural, come out of a *superstitious* Nazareth. There are moral improbabilities as well as physical. That a system such as Christ’s confessedly is, should originate in the self-taught and self-cultured soul of a Nazarene carpenter, one of the ‘mass of the Jews’ whose ‘ignorance and superstition’ are said to be so dense that words can scarcely describe them, is such an improbability—as great, we have argued, as any that can be alleged against the miracles of the Gospel. Most improbable, likewise, the fact would seem that never once in the world’s history have ‘the noblest and best of mankind,’ even in the most favourable circumstances, produced anything to compare with the system of the Nazarene. In the terms of Hume’s argument against miracles, we might say that all this is ‘contrary to experience.’ And contrary to all experience it is, and it

Contrary to experience.

is not true, that such a man, even apart from the supernatural that is ascribed to Him, could have been produced by such an age, or could have arisen except by the operation of laws and causes unknown to 'nature.'

The argument which ascribes to the superstition of the age the faith of the earliest known Christianity in the divine nature and functions of the Christ, has force only so long as its assertions are vague and nebulous. When we resolve it into its elements, it vanishes like mist. It would be no difficult thing to prove that our own age is superstitious. We boast of our philosophy and our science, and there are many who glory even in their scepticism. But on the other hand, we find rife among us follies as gross as ever were held or perpetrated by Eastern magicians among the superstitious populace of heathen Rome. And these are not confined to the lower strata of society. Among other and better educated classes, we find superstitions which may well make us blush for the boasted enlightenment of the nineteenth century. Witness the pilgrimages from even British shores, headed by English nobles and men of the highest English culture, to La Salette and Paray-le-Monial. Shall we on this account denounce the 'age' as credulous and superstitious, and therefore capable of any folly, even to the extent of turning men into gods? Generalisations of this sort are misleading. The age *is* superstitious, *and* it is enlightened; it is an age of faith *and* of scepticism. Which is the stronger power, which is the predominant characteristic, who can say? Or if one ventures to pronounce a judgment, should he forget that what he deems the predominant characteristic is not the only characteristic of the age, that it is not universal, and that there are classes

Nebulous  
assertions.

Supersti-  
tion and  
culture.

The present  
age both  
sceptical  
and  
credulous.

whose spirit and action are not to be confounded with the spirit and action of the greater number?

Were Peter,  
John, and  
Paul super-  
stitious?

Evidence of  
any such  
spirit.

I. Cor. xiv.  
15-19.

Carrying with us this simple consideration, let us look at the men who represent to us the earliest Christianity of which we have any historic knowledge. Were they superstitious men? What signs of superstition can be traced in the lives and writings of Peter, John, and Paul? To appeal to their belief in the miracles and personal Divinity of Jesus Christ is to beg the question. There are those who regard faith in God and His Providence as a superstition. But the very questions at issue are, whether there is a God and a Providence, whether Jesus was God manifested in the flesh, and whether He wrought miracles while He was known among men as a man. And what we want to discover is whether the ancient Christians were infected by such a spirit of credulousness or superstition as may fairly subject their faith in Christ to suspicion, and even account for the great delusion under which they came to regard Him whom they knew as a man, and who never professed to be more, as very God. We ask for the evidence that they were the victims of any such spirit. Their writings are calm and sober, with much of close argument, full of clear and lofty thoughts respecting God and the worship in spirit and in truth, which alone He accepts. They were not beside themselves through superstition or any other evil and morbid affection. 'I will pray with the spirit,' says one of them, 'and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. . . . I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand

words in an unknown tongue.' This is the language of a man who could not tolerate dreaminess in thinking, who walked in light, and whose mission was to enlighten others. 'Be not children in understanding,' he said to his converts; 'in understanding be men.' If ever a man was free from the spirit of superstition, it was Saint Paul.

I. Cor. xiv.  
29.

The first missionaries of Christianity came into contact and collision with the superstitions of their age wherever they travelled, not merely in the persons of the common heathen people who were 'carried away unto dumb idols,' but in the persons of 'vagabond' Orientals, chiefly Jews, who made merchandise of men by the practice of magical arts. These sorcerers or magicians recognised in the doctrine of Paul not an allied or kindred power, but one of the utterest hostility. There is an obvious parallel between the demoniacs who are reported in the Gospels as saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us?' and men like Elymas and the seven sons of Sceva, who saw in the Christian preaching a divine power which had come to destroy their craft and the superstition on which it flourished. These men were right. The doctrine which Paul preached respecting Christ, instead of being a superstition or the fruit of superstition, was the very death of superstition, the world's redemption from its idols, and from all that was debasing and corrupting, as well as puerile and ignoble, in the world's mythologies.

In collision  
with the  
supersti-  
tions of the  
world.

Vagabond  
Orientals.

Mark i. 24.

Acts xiii.  
and xix.

Christianity  
the death of  
supersti-  
tion.

The knowledge of God has ever been the most effective destroyer of superstition. It was so of old. 'Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the

Jer. x. 2.

heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven ; for the heathen are dismayed at them.' Thus wrote Jeremiah. The signs of the heavens, especially in the matter of comets and eclipses, have been the occasion of superstition and superstitious fears to the heathen, both civilised and uncivilised. The army of Alexander before the battle of Arbela was so frightened by an eclipse of the moon, that the soldiers, deeming it a sign that the gods were displeased at the enterprise of their leader, refused to proceed on their march from the Tigris, till assured by the Egyptian soothsayers that the eclipse of the moon was an omen of peculiar evil to their enemies, the Persians. History is full of tales of this character. Science, by expounding natural laws, undermines fantastic and superstitious interpretations of natural phenomena. But many tribes are so low that they have no ear to listen to the interpretations of science. And it is only when their ear is opened, and their heart moved, by religion, that they become amenable to the forces of reason and science. The Christian faith is now, as of old in the days of its first preachers, the mightiest deliverer of men from superstition, not only by making known to them the rule of God over nature, but by inspiring them with the confidence of children in their Father in heaven.

4. The hypothesis which accounts for the conceptions of the early Christians respecting the supernatural person and work of Christ by ascribing them to the superstition of the age, becomes untenable in proportion as it is demanded of it that it shall be definite. The allegation is not only that the age was superstitious, *but it was an age given to deify men and to invest them with supernatural powers.* This, too, like the

Science.

Religion.

The deification of men.

more general charge of superstition, dissolves into vapour when closely examined.

That the Roman emperors did demand for themselves, and for some others, divine honours, is well known. Tacitus tells us of a city which was deprived of its freedom for being unwilling to worship Augustus. Döllinger reckons fifty-three apotheoses between that of Cesar and that of Diocletian, fifteen of which were those of ladies belonging to the imperial family. Not a few of those thus deified were monsters of lust and cruelty. 'Caligula,' says Froude, 'was a savage, and he knew it. When they told him he was a god, in grotesque mockery of himself and his instructors, he challenged Jupiter Capitolinus to fight, and Jupiter not responding, he took the head from his statue and replaced it with his own. He stood on the temple steps and bade the people pray to him. He appointed a chapter of priests to offer sacrifices to him, the choicest that could be found, and either in servility or in the same spirit of wild riot, the patricians contended for the honour of admission to the extraordinary order.' There is no proper analogy between such apotheoses and the Incarnation in which the first Christians believed. It may be safely affirmed that the citizens of Rome who bowed down before their emperors as gods, did not believe that they were gods. The homage was rendered, not to the divine, but to the despotic. And, as Doctor Liddon says, 'animal indulgence and intellectual scepticism must have killed out the sense of primary truths which nature and conscience had originally taught, before imperial Rome could feel no difficulty in decreeing temples and altars, to such samples of our race as were not a few of the men who successively filled the throne of the

The Roman emperors.

'Short Studies' (Third Series).

Wanton vagaries of Caligula.

Not the Divine, but the despotic.

The story of  
Polycarp.

Why the  
first  
Christians  
worshipped  
Christ.

Not an  
apotheosis,  
but an in-  
carnation.

Baur on  
Judaism.

Cæsars.' But it was otherwise with the Christians. They were content to die rather than burn one grain of incense on the altar of the mightiest Cæsar. Witness the well-known story of the aged Polycarp.

The reason why Roman Christians worshipped Christ, while they refused to worship Cæsar, was not, however, that the character of the one was beautifully pure while the character of the other was vile and corrupt, but that they regarded the One as very God Incarnate, while they regarded the other as only a man. The spirit which appreciated the sinless purity of the Christ, and saw in it the sign of a higher personality than the merely human, was a spirit not likely to confound the human and the divine, or to be betrayed into the idolatry of worshipping the human as divine. 'The Church with her eye upon the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, could never have raised Jesus to the full honours of divinity had He been merely man. And Christianity from the first has proclaimed herself, not the authoress of an apotheosis, but the child and product of an incarnation.'

How far the alleged tendency of the age to deify man fails to account for the Godhead ascribed to Christ by His first followers, becomes more palpable when we remember that these followers were Jews. 'The specific distinction of Judaism,' says Baur, 'marking it off from all forms of heathen religious belief whatever, is its purer, more refined, and monotheistic conception of God. From the earliest antiquity downwards this was the essential basis of the Old Testament religion.' And it is well known that from the time of the Babylonish captivity, the Jewish people were thoroughly purged of those idolatrous proclivities which had often betrayed them into apostacy from



Jehovah. At no period of their history was their spirit more intensely anti-idolatrous, more intolerant of anything that bore the semblance of an encroachment on the prerogatives of the one Living God, than in the age of Christ's appearance among them. The Nazarene cannot say, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' without exciting the eager cry, 'Who can forgive sins but God only?' The utterance of words which seem to claim equality with God, is at once provocative of tumult, and endangers His life. And when other charges against Him fail to interest or move the populace, the charge of blasphemy, in that He has called Himself the Son of God, awakens a fanaticism which will be satisfied with nothing but His death.

The Jews of Christ's day went even beyond their Scriptures in their jealousy of everything that could, by the most distant inference, be construed as affecting the glory of the Godhead. 'If there is an acknowledged fact in our day,' says De Pressensé, 'it is that the idea of God had undergone a wide modification among the Jews in the time preceding the Christian era, not only at Alexandria where Platonic influence predominated, but also in Palestine. There was a deeper impression than ever of the incomprehensibility of God. He was removed to an inaccessible height. To judge from the Talmud, Gamaliel seems to have expressed himself more decidedly than any of his predecessors on the impossibility of our knowing the dwelling-place of the Almighty. The conclusion from this incomprehensibility of God was that He could not reveal Himself to, nor have any direct communication with, man. Thus the numerous instances of Theophany in the Old Testament became a scandal, and the sacred narratives were unscrupulously mani-

After the  
Babylonish  
captivity.

Jewish  
jealousy of  
the Divine  
glory.

'Jesus  
Christ: His  
Times, Life,  
and Work,'  
pp. 105—106.

pulated to bring them into harmony with this new theory; wherever the text spoke of a direct manifestation of God, an angel was substituted, or the sacred cloud, which was called the Shekinah. This tendency, so marked in the translation of the Septuagint, is not less evident from the Targums, which date from the first century of the Christian era. Thus when Jacob exclaims that he has seen the Lord face to face, Onkelos makes him say, 'I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face.' Where the text runs, 'They saw the God of Israel,' the paraphrase renders it, 'They saw the glory of God. . . .' The inference is, that the Shekinah was designed to obviate the scandal of a direct Theophany.

Gen. xxxii.  
30.  
Exod. xxiv.  
10.

Distance  
between  
man and  
Deity.

'The Targums set aside no less scrupulously all assimilation, even the most distant, between man and Deity. Thus when God says, after Adam had eaten of the tree of knowledge, 'He is become as one of us,' Onkelas modifies the text thus, 'Behold Adam is unique in the world.' The commentator is scandalised at the words of the serpent to Eve, 'Ye shall be as gods,' and makes him say, 'Ye shall be as happy as princes.' This marked repugnance to everything that tends to an approximation between humanity and Deity is very significant. 'The personal and corporeal appearances of Deity,' says M. Reuss, 'did not accord with a speculative theory which was already widely developed.' Assuredly the distance was great between such a point of view, and the pre-eminent instance of Theophany—the incarnation of the Son of God.'

What the  
pre-disposi-  
tion of the  
disciples  
was.

We can now judge what the predisposition of the disciples of Jesus was. It was not to deify man, but to shrink from the very idea of a man being God. The tendency of their age, the Jewish tendency of the

age, was not to accept readily the notion that God might come down in the likeness of man, but to surround Him with a hedge of exclusiveness which even He could not pass.

The hypothesis which ascribes the 'Deification' of Jesus Christ to the spirit of the age, is thus at fault at every point. It assumes that Jesus wrought no miracles, and that He did not rise from the dead. The reality which the disciples saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears, was purely natural—it was a good man, wise above His fellows, filled with zeal for God and for humanity, struggling with the corruptions of the age, and at last crushed by the overwhelming power of a Sadducean priesthood and a heathen government. And we are to believe that within a very few years this good man, who had utterly failed to regenerate His nation—crucified, dead, and buried—is worshipped by those who had seen Him perish helplessly on the cross; and is preached to the world as one who has a right that every knee should bow to Him and every tongue confess that He is universal Lord—and that, notwithstanding the fact that His disciples had something like horror at the idea of exalting man into God. Is this credible? The verdict which commonsense pronounces on this hypothesis is not merely 'not proven,' but 'contrary to evidence.'

If the miracles of Christ were admitted, if that strange scene on the Mount of Transfiguration was accepted as historical, if it was believed that He rose from the dead and disappeared supernaturally from the midst of His disciples on Mount Olivet, there would be some show of reason for saying that the wondering imagination of His disciples magnified a mysterious man

The deification theory at fault at every point.

His miracles not admitted—Yet,

If His miracles were admitted.

into a God. There would still, indeed, be evidence that this is not the true explanation of the worship offered by the disciples of Christ to their Master. But the explanation would be superficially plausible. But the one thing needed to give even a superficial plausibility to the explanation is wanting. The miracles which might have misled the disciples into an over-estimate, of their Master, the stories of heavenly voices, the resurrection and ascension, which might have confirmed the disciples in their mistaken over-estimate, are themselves, we are told, myths or fictions. They cannot then be the foundation on which Peter, John, and Paul built the grand structure of the Incarnation. They cannot be the occasion of the extraordinary conceptions which these representatives of primitive Christianity entertained respecting the personality of Christ. So far from being in any sense the cause of these conceptions, they sprang, all of them — all forms of supernatural, all alleged supernatural deeds and occurrences — from the same root or source. The supernatural ascribed to Christ while He lived, and the Deity ascribed to Him when He was gone, do not stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect: they are both the effects of one cause, the superstition of the age! Can this be true?

It must not be forgotten for a moment, that on this hypothesis the only reality out of which the disciples made the God Incarnate whom they preached among all nations, was a man, who never professed to be more than a man; too devout to dream of professing to be more; a Nazarene by birth, a carpenter by trade, only superlatively wise and intolerant of the corruptions of His age. And the disciples who, without any visible show

The only  
reality  
admitted  
by this  
hypothesis.

of reason, out of this mere man made for themselves a God, were men who had grown up in an atmosphere the most unfavourable to such a process, whose education and learning made such a process abhorrent to their strongest and deepest religious feelings. Godet, after remarking that the formula—‘Those who call on the name of the Lord’—was only a reproduction of that by which the Old Testament designated the worshippers of Jehovah, simply substituting the name of Jesus for that of Jehovah, says, ‘Now, let us recall the austerity of the Israelitish monotheism; of that monotheism with which the Apostles and first believers were imbued from their cradle, and the merciless severity of which was the reason of the condemnation of Jesus by the Sanhedrim; let us reflect on the almost insurmountable moral difficulty which must have been therein contained for men, brought up under the empire of such a principle, to recognise as worthy to be invoked and adored, a being with whom they had familiarly lived, travelled, eaten, and drunk, and whom they had seen die; and we will feel that the Israelitish believers never could have risen to such a faith, if there had not issued from the lips of Jesus Himself precise declarations on this point, such as those which are presented to us in the fourth Gospel.’

More than this. ‘Jesus Christ Himself, by His own teaching,’ as Canon Liddon remarks, ‘had made such an apotheosis of Himself [as that alleged] impossible. He had, as no teacher before Him, raised, expanded, spiritualised, man’s idea of the life and nature of the Great Creator. Baur has remarked that this higher exhibition of the solitary and uncommunicable life of God is nowhere so apparent as in the very Gospel, the

Acts ii. 21.  
I. Cor. i. 2.

On John,  
Vol. I.,  
pp. 6–7.  
The aust-  
erity of  
Jewish  
monotheism

Impression  
of Christ’s  
own teach-  
ing.

special object of which is to exhibit Christ Himself as the Eternal Word made flesh. Indeed, God was too vividly felt to be a living presence by the early Christians to be transformed by them upon occasion into a decoration which might wreath the brow of any, though it were the highest human virtue.'

The spirit of the age, we are now justified in saying, so far as it affected the followers of Christ, instead of conducing to the grand mistake of worshipping a man as God, was a hindrance in the way of accepting, even on good evidence, the fact of a true Incarnation of God in man. And yet we find on historic grounds which cannot be gainsaid, that from a very few years after the death of Jesus Christ—we may say, from the very beginning—those who had seen Him and heard Him did believe, without known exception and without controversy, that He was the Son of God, possessed of the very nature of God, and entitled to the worship that is due to God only. Moreover, the only memoirs which have survived of what this Jesus did Himself say about Himself, are full of assertions reported to have been made by Him, in which, explicitly or implicitly, He gave those who heard Him, many of them hostile to Him, to understand that He claimed to have come down from heaven, and to be, in a sense peculiar to Himself, one with God and the Son of God. On what hypothesis can we explain all these facts? On this only, that the Gospel records of the words of Christ are genuine, and that the words are true. On any other supposition the primitive faith of Christians in the divinity of their Christ, and in His continued life and reign in heaven, is inexplicable.

5. To get rid of the supernatural in Christ and in

The true  
tendency of  
the spirit of  
the age.

His works, as mere accretions of a later age, some consider it enough to say off-handedly that *all religions have had their miracles, and that therefore the Christian miracles need not trouble us*. Writing to Keshub Chunder Sen with reference to an eminent man lately deceased, Professor Max Müller said, 'He was not troubled by miracles. He knew, as every historian knows, or by this time ought to know, that there is no religion without miracles, and yet that the founders of the three highest religions have unanimously condemned miracles. Your ancient native religion is full of miracles, and it would be quite as true to call them psychologically inevitable as to call them physically impossible. But—know that certain minds cannot believe anything unless they first believe in miracles. To these men of little faith miracles are everything, and if their faith in miracles was undermined, their faith in everything else would crumble to pieces. This may seem strange to you, for I am sure you did not believe in Christ because He could change water into wine, or cast out devils, or heal the sick, or feed the hungry, or calm the storm, or walk on the water. A man may be believed to have done all that and much more, as in the case of your ancient Rishis, and yet you would not believe his doctrines unless they could command a very different sanction.'

Miracles  
common to  
all religions.

Max Müller.

Hindoo  
miracles.

I confess to not a little wonder and disappointment that one who claims to be a historian of no common order, one who penetrates to the roots of things, should so superficially, and yet so dogmatically, confound things that differ. There is not a sentence in the passage just quoted that is not in some way misleading.

First of all, be it admitted that all religions have

True inference from universal belief in miracles.

'The Friend,'  
Bohn's  
Edition,  
p. 286.

'Discourses  
on the  
Evidences  
of Revealed  
Religion.'

See 'Hand-  
book of  
Christian  
Evidences,'  
pp. 86-87.

Miracles  
not repu-  
diated by  
Christ.

Matt. xi.  
1-5.

John xv. 21.

had their miracles, what inference should be drawn from the fact? That all miracles are false or un-genuine? and that all the religions which have claimed the authority of miracles are false? This surely would be a rash conclusion. The general belief in miracles is a moral phenomenon that deserves to be carefully studied. Coleridge thinks more wisely than Max Müller. 'I am firmly persuaded,' he says, 'that no doctrine was ever widely diffused among various nations, through successive ages, and under different religions, which is not founded either in the nature of things, or in the necessities of human nature.' 'The propensity of men to believe in what is strange and marvellous,' says Dr. Channing, 'though a presumption against particular miracles is not a presumption against miracles universally, but rather the reverse; for great principles of human nature have generally a foundation in truth.' The great beliefs of mankind certainly have such foundation. And the only sufficient explanation of the common faith of men in the supernatural or miraculous, is that it springs from, or at least is nourished by, a deep and ineradicable instinct of our nature.

Coming to particulars—*it is not true* that the founders of the three highest religions have unanimously condemned miracles. The chiefest of them, as we have seen, said to the messengers of John the Baptist, 'Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, and the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.' On another occasion Jesus said, 'If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin;



but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father.' It is true, as already remarked, that He refused to work such miracles, senseless prodigies, as many craved to see; and true likewise that He complained that the people, and even His disciples, did not appreciate, as they ought, other signs that He was the sent of God. But it is equally true that He acknowledged the right of Israel to have supernatural evidence that He was indeed their Messiah.

As to the founder of Buddhism condemning miracles, apart from the difficulty of knowing what he condemned or approved, the very idea of the miracle, as understood by Christians and Theists, could have no place in his mind. Whether he was an Atheist proper or only an Agnostic, may be a question. But he excluded God from his teaching, and in the absence of God, a miracle is impossible, there being no one to work it.

There are two grand differences between the Christian miracles and the prodigies connected with the story of the Buddha, which no one is better able to appreciate than Professor Max Müller, although he ignores them in his letter to Chunder Sen.

The first is the historic evidence in support of the former, and the utter absence of historic evidence in support of the latter. Jesus lived in the full light of an historic age, and the facts which are related in the Gospels were proclaimed to all the world in the very age in which they are said to have occurred. The testimony of contemporaries has come down to us in a precise historic form. As to Gautama, history proper tells us nothing. At least twenty dates have been assigned for his death, varying from 2,420 B.C. to

Mal. xii. 39.  
xvi. 4.

John iv. 48.  
xiv. 8-11.

The founder  
of Budd-  
hism.

Difference  
between  
Christian  
miracles  
and  
Buddhist  
prodigies.

Historic  
evidence.

Time of  
Gautama.

Professor  
Kellogg on  
'The Light  
of Asia and  
the Light of  
the World,'  
ch. ii.

According  
to Max  
Müller.

368 B.C., a difference of more than two thousand years. Even the most competent specialists in Buddhist literature and archaeology differ in their opinion as to the date of the death of the Buddha, to the extent of almost two hundred years. But whether it was in the middle of the sixth century B.C., or the middle of the fifth, or the middle of the fourth, it is certain that we have no contemporaneous history of India, whether written by friend or foe, which might either directly or indirectly witness to so much as the existence of the Buddha, or the manner of the early propagation of his doctrine. Mr. Max Müller himself says, 'That we can hardly ever expect to get nearer to the Buddha himself and to his personal teaching than the (Buddhist) Council of Azoka in 246 B.C.'; that is two hundred years after the date which the Professor assigns to the death of Gautama. And even then, whether any of the traditions respecting him were committed to *writing* for hundreds of years after this date, is a moot question among Buddhist scholars. Now what would be said if Jesus had lived in an obscure corner of the world, hidden from the eyes of men who wrote history, and if no records of Him and His teaching had been written till the fifth or sixth century after His death—could these records challenge the credence of the world? Of one thing we are sure—the Apocryphal Gospels, though written much earlier, bearing witness—they would be very different from our present Gospels, far more like the story of Buddhist marvels than the story of Christian miracles.

The  
character  
of the  
miracles  
and  
prodigies.

And this brings us to the second difference which the Professor overlooks, the difference between the miracles associated with the name of Christ on the one hand, and the prodigies connected with the name of

Gautama, and the prodigies of Hindooism, on the other. I cannot load my page with illustrations of these prodigies, but one or two may be given, otherwise their montrosity might not be credited. The story of the birth of Gautama is full of grotesque wonders. His mother, carried in dream into a golden palace on a silver hill, was placed on a celestial couch. There she saw the future Buddha, who in the form of a white elephant was wandering near by, approach her; and, holding in his silvery trunk, a white lotus flower, thrice doing obeisance, he seemed to enter her right side. One ancient tradition gravely states that he did actually enter her side in the form of a six-tusked white elephant. And thus, we are told, was the Buddha conceived. As to his 'Temptation,' it was on this wise: Mara, the Tempter, came into his presence riding on an elephant 2,400 miles high, appearing as a monster with 500 heads, 1,000 red eyes, and 500 flaming tongues; he had also 1,000 arms, in each of which was a weapon, no two of these weapons alike, with him also came an army of hideous demons, of every conceivable frightful form; an army so large that it extended on every side  $16\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and nine miles upward, while its weight was sufficient to overpoise the earth! We are told that on the occasion of the Buddha's first sermon, 'The various beings of the world all assembled that they might receive the ambrosia and nectar of *Nirvana*. All the various worlds, except the formless heavens, were left empty, as all the gods and heavenly beings came to hear him preach. So crowded were they that 100,000 gods had no more space than the point of a needle.'

This surely is enough. If we turn to those Hindoo prodigies, not miracles proper, which the ancient

The birth of  
Gautama.

The white  
elephant.

Kellogg,  
p. 70.

p. 76.

Temptation  
of Gautama.

Kellogg,  
p. 151.

James  
Kennedy,  
M.A., in  
'Christian-  
ity and the  
Religions of  
India.'

Ram  
Chandra  
Bose in 'The  
Truth of the  
Christian  
Religion, as  
established  
by the  
Miracles of  
Christ,'  
p. 118.

Rishis, according to the Professor, could recite, they are of the same monstrous order, with this addition, that many of them describe the gods and goddesses in colours too loathsome to be reproduced. 'We dare not pollute our pages,' says an Indian missionary, 'with passages we have read in books deemed most sacred, and with stories we have heard from the lips of Brahmans.'

A Hindoo Christian writes thus: 'Theodore Parker states, in his off-hand way, that so far as miracles are concerned, Christ is rivalled by Hercules, and surpassed by Vishnu. The argument . . . has only one defect—it confounds genuine coins with counterfeits, true miracles with false, the wonders that are real with the wonders which are pretended. The miracles of Hercules and Vishnu are no miracles, whereas those of Christ are genuine manifestations of power divine. The wildness, extravagance, and senselessness of the pretended wonders ascribed to heathen gods, are fitted at first sight to display their mythical, or rather grossly fabulous, character; while the chastity, reasonableness, and glory of the miracles of our Lord, together with the importance of the occasions when they were wrought, of the purposes they were intended to subserve, and of the moral truths they symbolised, together also with the enlightenment of the age which witnessed them, point them out as historical facts regarding which there is no room to doubt.'

Dr.  
Channing.  
Medieval  
miracles  
contrasted  
with  
Christ's—  
See the  
Author's

Channing's conclusion, not the Oxford Professor's, is according to truth and reason: 'If we find that a belief in a series of supernatural works has occurred under circumstances very different from those under which false prodigies have been received, under cir-

circumstances most unfavourable to the operation of credulity, then this belief cannot be resolved into the common causes which have blinded men in regard to supernatural agency. We must look for other causes, *and if none can be found but the actual existence of the miracles, then true philosophy binds us to believe them.*

6. There are those who are not satisfied with Prof. Max Müller's off-hand way of getting rid of the Christian miracles, but they can discover no new method, and can only reproduce old methods in new combinations. *This is true of Dr. Abbott's theory or theories.* The learned author of 'Through Nature to Christ,' and of 'The Kernel and the Husk,' has three methods of getting rid of the miracles of the Gospels. First, miracles of healing have a basis of actual fact—a natural basis. Secondly, the narrative of certain other miracles has arisen from a misunderstanding of metaphorical language. And thirdly, all miracles that cannot be thus disposed of are to be regarded as accretions around the original story of Christ's life. This, certainly, is most thorough. There is not a story in the Gospels that can stand against these methods of assault. If it cannot be got rid of by a natural explanation, or by the theory of a misunderstood metaphor, why, then, it must be got rid of by violence. The horrid word *lie* must not be used, but, consciously or unconsciously, the story is an invention.

To deal adequately with these naturalistic processes in this place is impossible. Nor is it necessary. If the argument we have pursued is valid, it contains a sufficient demonstration that the supernatural in

'Hand-book,'  
pp. 373—380.

Dr. Abbott's  
theories.

Miracles of  
healing  
natural.

Others from  
misunder-  
standing.

Others  
invented.

Christ and in His works is historically true. But a few words need to be added.

Miracles of healing.

First, as to the miracles of healing. These, it is admitted, may have had a basis of actual fact, but a purely natural basis. 'His signs and mighty works of healing flowed naturally from Him, as words of pity from us. They were the natural expressions of what He felt or rather saw. They were the result of insight into law, not violation of law, and they proved themselves by success to be in accordance with the deepest laws of nature.' 'It is not possible to study physiology, in however rudimentary a manner, without recognising that certain diseases, in particular paralysis, are susceptible to cure by a sudden emotional shock. How far Christ's miracles of healing may be explained in this way, as being natural in kind and supernatural only in degree, or how far the narratives may have been subjected to non-historical picturesque development and exaggeration, I am not prepared to say.'

'Through Nature to Christ,' p. 307.

Explanation not adequate.

Let my readers study the phenomena as they find them in the Gospels, and then say whether these can be explained on the theory of an emotional shock, or on any other natural theory. 'The bringer of light and happiness,' says Mr. Matthew Arnold, 'the calmer, and pacifier, or invigorator and stimulator, is one of the chiefest of doctors. Such a doctor was Jesus: such an operator, by an efficacious and real, though little observed and little employed, agency.' The centurion put an entirely different construction on Christ's power to heal when he compared it to his own military authority: 'I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.' Christ

The centurion.

Matt. viii. 5-9.

Himself was evidently unconscious that it was by any 'moral therapeutics' He healed the sick. And that it was can be maintained only at the cost of His honour. Nor was this discovery made by His disciples after Him. 'Why look ye so earnestly on us,' said Peter and John, 'as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?' 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth,' they had said to him, 'Arise and walk.' The Doctor's version of Christ's power to heal is but a revival of the fundamental principle of the old Rationalism which ascribed to Christ, and other workers of miracles, a special magnetic power, and which reduced 'the Son of God with power' to a benevolent Rabbi, who executed innumerable works of charity with the help of medical skill and good fortune.

Acts iii. 12.

Peter and John.

Secondly—some of the miraculous narratives are to be regarded as 'the result of a mistaken interpretation of metaphorical language.' 'Even in our Lord's lifetime,' we are told, 'His metaphors (as we call them) were being continually misunderstood, and interpreted literally. This is indeed admitted in the clearest manner in the narratives.' True to some extent. When Jesus spoke of being born again, Nicodemus asked, 'Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?' When He spoke of His flesh as the bread which He would give for the life of the world, the people asked, 'How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' But the assumption that out of such carnal and temporary misunderstandings there grew the history of great and notable miracles, is not only groundless but contrary to plain evidence. An example will suffice. Jesus called Himself the Bread of Life—and we are asked to believe that the

'Through Nature to Christ,'  
p. 307.  
'The Kernel and the Husk,'  
p. 185, &c.

John iii. 4.

vi. 51--52.

Misunderstandings.

Matt. xiv.  
Mark vi.  
Luke ix.  
John vi.

The miracle  
at  
Bethsaida.

story of the feeding of thousands at Bethsaida, recorded with many circumstantial details by all the Evangelists, has no foundation in fact, and is only a mythical reproduction of this designation, 'the Bread of Life.' Let the narrative be studied, and it will be found that the miracle *preceded* the discourse in Capernaum in which Jesus spoke of Himself as the Bread of Life, and that instead of the miracle growing in any sense out of this designation, the designation, and speaking generally, the entire phraseology of the discourse, was occasioned by the miracle. It was, moreover, in consequence of that miracle that the people would have taken Jesus by force to make Him a king. He was the very man, they naturally concluded, to do for the hosts of Israel in their conflict with Rome, what Moses did for them when he fed them with manna in their redemption from Egypt. Besides, to speak of a miracle, the occasion of which, the antecedents and consequences of which, are all minutely stated, as *growing* out of a phrase or metaphor, is altogether misleading. Its professed history, if not literally true, can be nothing short of a deliberate invention, in plain words consciously false. We do not wonder that after adding supposition to supposition to account for the transformation of the metaphor 'bread' into the Bethsaida miracle, Dr. Abbott should say, 'If this explanation seems thin, pedantic, and improbable, bear in mind that the choice lies between this and other explanations also highly improbable.' The most improbable of all being, of course, that of a true and literal miracle! The reader will not fail to recognise in the 'metaphorical' theory, a partial revival of the 'mythical' theory of Strauss, in 'many of whose arguments' Dr. Abbott says he can now



‘recognise considerable force, and yet remain a Christian.’

Thirdly, there are miraculous narratives in the Gospels which cannot be got rid of, either as having a natural historic basis, or as growing out of a misunderstanding of metaphors, such as the raising of Lazarus, the stilling of the storm, and the conversion of water into wine. And as these *cannot* (!) be *historical*, they *must be* later *accretions* around the original narrative. If so, they must have been either mythical growths or deliberate inventions. The first of these suppositions has been rejected by the most advanced Rationalists themselves. The second, Dr. Abbott says, he cannot accept. ‘The theory,’ he says, ‘that the Gospel miracles are *lies* is in my estimation more incredible than the theory that they are literally true and supernatural.’ More recently he has said, ‘For me it would be a terrible shock indeed if I were forced to suppose that a faithful Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ had wilfully misrepresented the truth with a view to glorify his Master.’ But all the theories, hitherto, like Strauss’s, which have been invented or imagined, to preserve the credit of Jesus Christ, and to find a spiritual essence in His religion, which should be independent of the supernatural envelope in which it has come down to us, have ended in admitting dishonesty either on the part of Christ or of His biographers.

As to additions to the Gospels, or interpolations, since they came from the hands of their authors, who-soever those authors may have been, the supposition is gratuitous, and serves no purpose but to help one’s escape from an admission that would be fatal to his theory. The Gospels can be traced to the age of the events which they record, and we have these

Interpolations.

But not lies.

‘Through Nature to Christ,’ p. 306.

‘The Kernel and the Husk,’ p. 177.

No accretions possible. See pp. 247—257 and 289—293 *ante*.

Reasons for  
this belief.

Com. on  
Luke,  
Vol. I.,  
p. 46.

guarantees that they are substantially what they were originally: (1) The general agreement of our text with the most ancient versions, the Pischito and the old Latin, which date from the second century, and with the three Egyptian translations made at the beginning of the third century; (2) the general agreement of the text with the quotations of the Fathers of the second and third centuries—Justin, Tatian, Irenæus, Clement, Tertullian, Origen, &c.; and, lastly (3), the general uniformity of the manuscripts in which the Greek text has been preserved. What Godet says of the Gospel by Luke is equally true of them all: ‘If any great changes had been introduced into the text, there would inevitably have been much greater differences among all these documents [the well known various readings being mere trifles]. *A text so universally diffused could only proceed from the text which was received from the first.*’

Believers in  
spiritual  
miracles.

The  
Author's  
Handbook,  
pp. 79, 197,  
193.

Before quitting this subject it may be remarked that those who believe in miracles in the spiritual world have no reason to be stumbled by miracles in the material world. For a miracle is not, as we have often to insist, a violation, not even a suspension, of the laws of nature, but that which is, as Dean Trench put it long ago, *above* nature (*super* nature), or *beyond* nature. It is something out of the range or scope of the action of natural law, and, therefore, cannot be said to be opposed to it. ‘In a miracle the will and power of God produce an effect, or result, or event, otherwise than as effects, results, and events are produced in the course of nature.’

‘Selected  
Essays,’  
p. 434.

Now *mind* may be the scene of the *supernatural* as well as matter. ‘If we are asked,’ says Mr. Max

Müller, 'how this one Abraham possessed not only the intuition of God as He has revealed Himself to all mankind, but passed through the denial of all other gods to the knowledge of the One God, we are content to answer that it was by a special Divine Revelation. We do not indulge in theological phraseology, but we mean every word to the fullest extent. . . . A divine instinct may sound more scientific and less theological; but in truth it would neither be an appropriate name for what is a gift or grace accorded to but few, nor would it be a more scientific—*i.e.*, a more intelligible word than Special Revelation.' Now a *special Divine Revelation* is as supernatural as the dividing of the sea for the redemption of Israel.

When resigning his connection with the Church of England because he could no longer believe in miracles, Mr. Stopford Brooke said that he did not leave the church to become a Theist. 'I believe,' he said, 'though the person of Christ is no longer miraculous to me, though I cannot consider Him as absolute God, yet that God has specially revealed Himself through Christ, that the highest religion of mankind is founded on His life and revelation, that the spirit of His life is the life and salvation of man, and that He Himself is the Head and Representative of mankind—Jesus Christ our Lord.' The author of these words does, after all, believe in the miraculous. He may not believe in the great miracle of the Incarnation, perhaps not in the miraculous birth of the child Jesus, and perhaps not in such miracles as the raising of Lazarus from the dead. But he believes that 'God has specially revealed Himself through Christ.' Now a special Revelation is supernatural—that is, miraculous. It may be said that God has

Max Müller  
on Abra-  
ham.

Mr. Stop-  
ford Brooke  
on special  
revelation  
through  
Christ.

revealed Himself in Socrates and Plato, in Bacon and Newton, more than in ten thousand inferior men. But the difference is only one of degree. In and by Jesus Christ, God has revealed Himself *specialy*—which must mean, not in a higher degree merely, but altogether in a special way. Jesus, it is thus confessed, stands alone, separated from all other teachers, with this grand distinction that in these last days God hath spoken to us by His lips and by His life. This surely is supernatural.

Now if it is allowed that God has acted on the human *mind* otherwise than in the ordinary course, or by the ordinary means, of nature, why should it be doubted that God can and may act on *matter* in a way that is supernatural? Is He not the maker of both? And is not matter subject to His control as well as mind? There are men of science, we know, who would exclude God both from the genesis of the material universe and from the natural laws and forces through which it is preserved and perpetuated. But there are others, not less eminent, to whose intellect God is a necessity both in originating and sustaining the universe. Such was the late Dr. Carpenter, who believed 'in the universal and all-controlling agency of the Deity, and in His immediate presence throughout creation.' These are his words: 'When we have once arrived at that conception of force as an expression of *will*, which we derive from our own experience of its production, the universal and constantly sustaining agency of the Deity is recognised in every phenomenon of the external universe; and we are thus led to feel that in the material creation itself we have the same distinct evidence of His personal existence and ceaseless activity, as we have of the

May not  
God act on  
matter as  
well as on  
mind?

Dr. Car-  
penter.

Force an  
expression  
of will.

agency of intelligent minds in the creations of artistic genius, or in the elaborate contrivances of mechanical skill, or in those records of thought which arouse our physical nature into kindred activity.' If it be so, we may ask in words almost biblical, is the hand of the Lord straitened? or has He divested Himself of the right and power to work in the material world otherwise than through such natural laws as come within our cognisance?

Those who accept the teaching of St. John and St. Paul find in it what is to them a remarkable confirmation of the miraculous narratives in the life of Christ. The Apostle John says: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made.' The Apostle Paul says: 'In Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and unto Him; and He is before all things, and on Him all things consist.' If there be truth in these representations, when the Eternal Word, the Eternal Son, came into the world, 'He came unto His own,' and while the *nation* that was His own saw not His glory, the *creation* that was His own obeyed His voice. His miracles were signs of what He was, even the Lord of nature, the Lord of the material universe. And even those who are not prepared to bow to the authority of Apostles, can scarcely fail to be struck with the wonderful congruity which binds together the history of His life and the conceptions of His person, which prophets anticipated and Apostles preached. Can all this have been fortuitous? Can it have been of man?

John i.  
1-3.

Col. i.  
16-17.  
(Rev. Ver.)



PART FIFTH.

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THE SUPERNATURAL HYPOTHESIS  
CONFIRMED.





# THE SUPERNATURAL HYPOTHESIS CONFIRMED.

WE cannot sum up our argument, and conclude without, though at the risk of repetition, showing how the supernatural hypothesis of the person and authority of Christ is confirmed by its harmony with all the facts of the case.

1. *No other hypothesis is consistent with Christ's own words.* The words themselves cannot be got rid of by any critical process. Keim acknowledges, in terms already quoted, that Jesus applied to Himself 'overwhelming names and titles, before which all human categories sink into silence.' And yet the Evangelists who record these extraordinary names and titles represent Him as claiming to be meek and lowly. 'For eighteen hundred years (says Bushnell) these prodigious assumptions (of supremacy over the race and inherent oneness with God) have been published and preached to a world that is quick to lay hold of conceit, and bring down the lofty airs of pretenders; and yet, during all this time, whole nations of people, comprising as well the learned and powerful as the ignorant and humble, have paid their homage to the name of Jesus, detecting never any disagreement between His merits and His pretensions, offended never by any thought of His extravagance. Indeed, it will ever be found that in the common

Alone  
accounts  
for Christ's  
words.

Nature and  
the Super-  
natural,  
ch. x.

apprehension of the race He maintains the merit of a most peculiar modesty, producing no conviction more distinctly than that of His intense lowliness and humility. His worth is seen to be so great, His authority so high, His spirit so celestial, that instead of being offended by His pretensions, we take the impression of One in whom it is even a condescension to breathe our air. I say not that His friends and followers take this impression; it is received as naturally and irresistibly by unbelievers. I do not recollect any sceptic or infidel who has even thought to accuse Him as a conceited person, or to assault Him in this, the weakest and absurdest, if not the strongest and holiest, point in His character.'

Christlieb does not speak too strongly when he says — 'Either Christ uttered these sentiments *wrongly*, in extravagance and self-exaltation—and then let any man reconcile them with His otherwise perfect moral majesty; let him explain how from this haughty enthusiast, from this religious leader, who Himself was subject to sin and error, there could proceed the religion of humility and love, and the kingdom of truth with its world-regenerating effects; or, on the other hand, Christ was *right* in speaking these words, and did so with full clearness and truth; but then He was more than a mere man. From this we see that though all the works of Christ should vanish into myths, yet His words remain as an irrefutable proof of His Messiahship and Godhead; and so does His consciousness, with the views resulting therefrom, of His person and dignity, as something incompatible with all mere human standards.'

No hypothesis, but that which admits the literal and absolute truthfulness of the highest claims asserted

His lowliness un-questioned.

'Modern doubt and Christian belief,' p. 421.

by Christ, can bring into consistency with each other the wonderful character which unbelievers themselves admire, and the language in which He spoke habitually of Himself.

2. Nor can any other hypothesis bring into harmony *the twofold Evangelic representation of Jesus Christ, as a true and real man and yet without sin.* 'The Son of Man' was the title commonly assumed by Himself; and His whole style and demeanour were, as we have seen, that of a man who was unconscious of sin. Now humanity and sinlessness seem to us an impossible conjunction. 'We can believe any miracle,' says one, 'more easily than that Christ was a man, and yet a perfect character such as is here given.' And yet this is what the Gospels assert, partly on Christ's own authority. And their story is consistent with itself. They tell us that Jesus was born of a virgin, but that the angel who announced to the virgin her coming motherhood, described her child as 'That Holy Thing,'—'a beautiful and powerful stroke,' says Bushnell, 'to raise our expectation to the level of a nature so mysterious.' The history tells us of growth in the Holy Child, but does not give us the remotest indication of any process of correction or renewing by the Holy Spirit, such as Jesus Himself declared to a master in Israel all men must undergo in order to attain the Kingdom of Heaven. The after-life of this Holy Child corresponds with its bright and pure beginning. There does not rest the shadow of a cloud on the light of His perfect name. His original purity is developed in and into the activities of a life devoted to well-doing. It is subjected to Satanic temptation and to the corrupt influences of a grossly evil age, but

Real man,  
but sinless.

See  
pp. 139—147  
*ante*.

Needs no  
regeneration.  
John iii. 3.

the character of the man on the cross is as spotless as the babe in the manger.

If founded  
on fact,

Now we have to ask whether this representation of the life of Jesus is founded on fact or was conceived by the imagination of His followers ; and, if founded on fact, what it involves. That the character of Jesus was not the conception of His followers, does not need to be further proved. What honour should we be doing to those Apostles and first Christians who, at other times, are represented to us as so narrow and so limited in their views, if we suppose that they could have themselves conceived this idea in its singular elevation, grandeur, and sublimity, and have illustrated it with so much naturalness and ability in this series of pictures of their own invention ? No, the idea, as we conceive it in our own minds, was not the mother of the facts, but their offspring. There exists assuredly a thought which gave birth to these events, but it is not ours. It is that of the God who makes history, of Him who, from all eternity, willed the salvation and the glory of man.

Godet's  
'Studies in  
the New  
Testament,'  
p. 122.

How much  
involved in  
the fact.

If the Gospel representation of the sinless life is founded on fact—and we are shut up to the conviction that it is—how much does this fact involve ! 'If sinless,' says Bushnell, 'what greater, more palpable, exception to the law of human development, than that a perfect and stainless being has ever lived in the flesh ? If not, which is the supposition required of those who deny everything above the range of human development, then we have a man taking up a religion without repentance, a religion not human, but celestial, a style of piety never taught him in his childhood, and never conceived or attempted among men—more than this, a style of piety, withal, wholly unsuited to His

character as a sinner, holding it as a figment of insufferable presumption to the end of life, and that in a way of such unfaltering grace and beauty, as to command the universal homage of the human race! Could there be a wider deviation from all we know of mere human development?' From the dilemma thus presented there is no deliverance except by the admission that Jesus bore true witness concerning Himself when He claimed to be the Son of God. On this hypothesis, but on no other, can we reconcile the fact of His sinlessness with the fact of His humanity.

3. It is thus, likewise, that we give consistency to what otherwise is incongruous to the extent of absurdity, *the singularity and vastness of the professed object and aim of His mission and His apparent meanness and impotence*. 'The Son of Man came to give His life a ransom for many.' 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.' How any mere man should speak thus passes comprehension. And yet those are the words of a despised Nazarene. The former of them, the stronger and more mysterious of the two, is recorded not by the Evangelist who makes the explicit statement that the Eternal Word, who was God, became flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus Christ, but by the two Evangelists who are regarded as the most matter-of-fact and outward of the four. John asserts nothing more marvellous when he represents Christ as saying, 'God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Here is an end which must be accomplished, if accomplished at all, by means which the world knew not, means of another

Singularity and vastness of Christ's aim.

Matt. xx.  
28.  
Mark x. 45.  
John x. 10.

See  
pp. 112-116  
*ante*.

iii. 16.

order than any known to ruler or philosopher, means not to be found in the treasury of the resources of nature.

His King-  
ship and  
Kingdom.

Corresponding with this unearthly and superhuman end which Jesus undertook to effect, were His representations of His Kingship and Kingdom. His Kingdom was to be not of this world, but spiritual, one to which the very hearts and consciences of men were to be subjected. The whole human race were to be called to its obligations and privileges. From the most distant parts men should come to sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in its holy fellowship. In order to its establishment and universality, He commanded His Apostles to preach His Gospel among all nations, giving them the mysterious assurance, 'Lo I am with you alway.' The progress of His Kingdom might be slow, but the grain of mustard seed should grow into a mighty tree. Obstacles might seem to be insuperable. His own death, or the deaths of faithful followers, might destroy all hope of success. But no. 'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.' 'And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.' Thus calmly, as with the consciousness of a divine power and divine certainty, Jesus spoke of His Kingdom. Of His Kingship and Kingly power He was not more conscious in the hour of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, than in the hour of His shameful death on Calvary. 'Lord, remember Me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom.' 'This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'

John xii. 24.

v. 32.

It is not mere sublimity that excites our wonder in all this; nor merely the catholicity, although that is noticeable, which forms so striking a contrast with the

narrowness of His nation. All comparison with the greatest lawgivers and conquerors, or even with 'the prophet-founders of religions,' is irrelevant. Christ's idea stands alone. And His ambition which seeks empire over the whole nature of man, and over his whole eternity, and which claims it, is such as never entered into another man's heart to conceive. Was He sane, or was He beside Himself? The question often occurs to us. But it never admits of but one answer. A maniac might claim to do what only God can do. But His madness 'could not be hid.' The most widely admitted attribute of this man is wisdom—a wisdom which may be called superhuman in degree if not in origin. And it is with a wisdom the most profound that the Nazarene villager 'lays out His plans,' and ordains the means by which they are to be executed. We are shut up to the conclusion that His wisdom was divine in the strictest sense, and that He was Himself divine. On this hypothesis we can explain how that, though 'in the form of man,' and in a condition of human life so humble, He had not of His own where to lay His head, He should be conscious of all the power that was needed in continuance through all generations of man on the earth, and onward into the other world, to execute the vast schemes which He unfolded to His followers. On this hypothesis it was natural that to Him a thousand years should be as one day, and that He should speak of the future of remote ages with the quiet certitude with which He might have spoken of to-morrow. On this hypothesis His claim to the throne of the final judgment is not extravagant. On this hypothesis, in fine, all the words of the Christ, and all the parts of His mysterious glory and character, fall into their

His ambi-  
tion,  
His idea  
stands  
alone.

His wisdom  
and Himself  
Divine.

place and form a whole, whose symmetry and grandeur will attract the adoration of ages to come, as they have of ages that are past.

4. We may go one step further, although what we have to say further is to a great extent involved in what has been said already. The hypothesis which we maintain explains *the self-consistency of the entire personal consciousness and personal conduct of Jesus Christ*. We make no attempt to solve the mystery of the union of the divine and human in the person of Christ, nor do we trouble ourselves with questions which have greatly perplexed the Christian Church regarding the divine and human will of the Son of God. Neither the Gospels nor the Epistles contain any theory on the subject nor require faith in any theory. They give us the great fact of the Incarnation, and tell the story of the earthly life of the Incarnate One. They represent Him in an immense variety of circumstances and experiences. And what we have to mark is the perfect consistency of all His speech and action, and of His consciousness as it showed itself in speech and action, with His assumed character as Son of God and Son of Man. Let a man dare to assume the character of an Incarnation, resolve to play the part of an Incarnate One and live a sinless life, and avow the end of his appearance on earth to be the establishment of a reign of holiness and truth over human souls—it will require a miracle greater and other than any recorded in the Gospels to act his part consistently for one day. By all that we know of the laws which affect our moral nature, as well as by all that we know of the laws by which God governs the world, we may assert that such an actor would soon

His entire  
personal  
conscious-  
ness.

A fact, not  
theories.

See 'The  
Jesus of the  
Evan-  
gelists.' By  
Prebendary  
Row.



betray the unreality of his profession. But as we follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ, we are never startled into suspicion by word or deed of His. He never falls beneath the wonderful character which He assumes. There is no incongruity between His life and the idea of perfect man and perfect God. The Godhead is veiled of necessity by the manhood. 'That glorious form, that light unsufferable,' of which Milton speaks, 'and that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,' that glory which He had with the Father before the world was, must be laid aside or hidden. Man could not bear to look upon it. But yet the light and glory shine through the veil sufficiently to show that God is there. He may be 'wearied with His journey' through Samaria, but His conversation will soon show that He is more than a Jew, more than a Prophet. He may weep at the grave of Lazarus, but the grave must acknowledge His power. He may sleep on the boat's pillow, but winds and waves hear in His voice the will of their Ruler. He may yield Himself, for the purpose of His mission, to the sentence that He shall die, but He will rise again from the dead. He may submit to the laws which limit humanity on earth, but in His departure from the earth He will show His independence of these laws. In His intercourse with His followers, and with the sufferers who seek His help, He is found a friend, full of the tenderest sympathy, but those to whom His heart of love is most revealed, become the most assured that He is their Lord as well as their Brother. And throughout, as there is nothing to create suspicion, so is there no appearance of effort to sustain an assumed part. All is natural.

No incongruity.

The Divine shining through the Human.

Given the problem how to frame the life of an

Human  
attempt to  
portray  
the Divine  
vain.

Incarnate God, we should be confounded by its difficulty. If we made the attempt, the result would be a picture full of obtrusive colours and incongruous associations, that would betray its human authorship. The attempt has really never been made. The monstrosities of Hindoo mythology, that bear the name of Avatars, are not fit to be mentioned, nor is the birth of Buddha, to which reference has already been made. The so-called Book of Enoch approximates to the Gospel idea of the personal dignity of the Messiah. But it is 'wholly devoid of a single attempt to present us with the union of the portraiture of the divine and human in a single personality. It does not furnish us with a single trait of the picture of the meek, holy, humble, unselfish, suffering Jesus, willingly surrendering Himself to the fulfilment of His Father's will. Nowhere is the perfection of humanity exhibited in union with the consciousness of Deity.'

Contrasted  
circum-  
stances.

The problem which has nowhere else been proposed, far less solved, is presented to us in the Gospels and actually solved—neither proposed formally nor solved formally, but proposed and solved in the history of a living person who associated with man as a man, and yet habitually acted as if He was more than a man. We see Him in circumstances of the utmost contrast—on a mountain, which is not named, 'transfigured,' so that His face shone as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; and, in the garden of Gethsemane, in such soul-trouble that His sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood. But between the two scenes there is the closest relationship as well as the widest contrast. On the Mount of Transfiguration the converse of Jesus with His heavenly visitants was on the decease which He should accomplish in

Jerusalem, and the agony in Gethsemane was but the prelude of that decease. Even thus united are the scene of darkness and death on Calvary, and the scene of glory on Olivet when He was received up into heaven. These contrasts are typical of the union of 'meanness and majesty' in His person. And the wonder we have to contemplate is the consistency of the whole, and His self-consistency as the God-man, whether He bows beneath a weight of sorrow, or by a word or a look makes His dignity so felt that His very captors fall to the ground. We have an easy and a perfect explanation of this great mystery in the hypothesis which acknowledges that Jesus spoke the truth concerning Himself in those many words which He spoke, both in confidential intercourse with His disciples and in the presence of questioners and enemies; in which, both implicitly and simply, He taught the world that He was very Son of God and Son of Man; that His mission on earth was one of divine love to save the lost; and that He should come again, not in humiliation, but in power and glory, to sit on the throne of Final and Eternal Judgment. And the truthfulness of the history on which this hypothesis is based, and which it explains, can be denied only on grounds that would turn all history into fables and confusion.

Truth  
explains.

5. *Even the miracles ascribed to Christ find their only sufficient explanation in His supernatural person.* On the supposition that He was only a sublime religious genius, who excogitated divine ethics out of His own soul, and was self-moved to seek the regeneration of His people, and perhaps of other peoples as well, the miracles ascribed to Him in the Gospels have no

If only a  
religious  
genius—  
What?

*raison d'être*, they have no proper or natural relation to His person or work. They are meaningless, and we do not wonder that those who regard Christ as only a self-taught and self-inspired man, should speak of the miracles of the Gospels as not evidences but stumbling-blocks. Any mere man who should attempt to gain credit for his teaching, and authority for his doctrines—his teaching and doctrines being his own and only his own—by the professed exercise of supernatural power would only expose himself to contempt. His alleged miracles would be more than stumbling-blocks, they would be a reason for refusing to listen to him. But in the case with which we have to deal in the Gospels, the personal character is so pre-eminent, and the narrative of the miracles is so well sustained, while their character is in such beautiful harmony with the character and wisdom with which the narrative associates them, that we are thrown into irremediable confusion by the assertion that Jesus Christ was only a man with no divine commission, and, therefore, no divine power. And the confusion can result only from some essential flaw in the assertion which produces it.

If Divinely  
commis-  
sioned.

Advancing a step in our faith—if we assume that Jesus Christ, though only a man, was a divinely-commissioned and inspired prophet, we shall have no difficulty in admitting, on sufficient evidence, that ‘He was mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.’ His miracles will then have not only a physical ground in the power of God, but also a moral reason in the presumed necessity for certifying the authority with which He addresses the world. There may, it is true, be prophetic authority without supernatural attestation. The reality of the divine com-

munications made to Israel of old in the name of the Lord was attested, for the most part, by their conformity to the law which had already been given amid supernatural signs ; by the consciences of the people ; and by the spirit in which the prophets spoke. John the Baptist, we are expressly told, 'did no miracle.' And we are not aware that he received any outward 'sign,' even for his own satisfaction, except it be in the circumstances of his birth, of which he was no doubt fully informed. His ministry, although supernatural in its origin and authority, needed no miracle. It was an appeal to the consciences of the people, founded on divine laws, and threatenings, and promises, with which they were familiar.

But there are 'missions' which need miraculous signs for their attestation. That of Moses, when commanded to go and bring Israel out of Egypt, for example. The feeling which he expressed when he said, 'They will say the Lord hath not appeared to thee,' was natural and rational. Let him go to them as a patriot burning to deliver them from their bondage ; let him, by his eloquence, light the fire of freedom in their bosoms, and kindle a flame that shall melt their chains. In such a character let him do what he can for the emancipation of his brethren. It will be for them to reckon the chances of success in an attempt to throw off the yoke of Egypt, and to say whether they will risk all, life itself, in one great effort to be free. But it is not in the character of a patriot, self-moved, or even God-moved, that he is about to return to his brethren. He is going to tell them, in the name of the God of their fathers, that the hour of their deliverance is come, that Jehovah has appeared to them in a very mysterious way, has expressed His

Some missions require 'signs.'

Exodus iv.  
1.  
That of Moses.

Not a mere patriot.

deep compassion for His people, and has charged him to go and stand before the tyrant who oppressed them, and demand of him, under pain of divine judgment, to release his bondsmen. And in these circumstances Israel *must* arise and prepare, in the face of all difficulties, to march forth to freedom. It is not an open question which they may debate with one another and with Moses, whether success is possible or probable, and whether it will be wise of them to incur the fearful hazard of showing signs of restlessness and dissatisfaction. They *must* arise and depart, that they may serve the God of their fathers. *But how shall they be satisfied that the message and pretensions of Moses are genuine? That he is neither deceiving nor being deceived?*

I may stand up in the face of all London and say, 'Repent of your sins; if ye repent not, ye shall perish.' And London has already sufficient knowledge and conscience to justify me in demanding repentance, without calling on me to work any miracle. But if I enforce my call to repentance by saying, 'The God of heaven has appeared to me in a vision of the night, and commanded me to say to London, you have sunk into worldliness and idolatry, and so long as you hold to your ships and warehouses and workshops you will be worldly and idolatrous still; you must prepare to leave them, and go forth to the most desert regions your country possesses. The trumpet of God shall sound on a certain day, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, let every man, woman and child, howsoever employed, arise and go forth for ever from the scenes and occupations of their present life, to receive a new law from God, and to serve Him where He shall please to determine.' This message contains no

London—  
Repent.

London—  
'Go forth.'

internal *evidence* of its being from God; it goes far beyond what the universal conscience can recognise as divine, and beyond what previous knowledge, whether acquired from revelation or otherwise, would lead the people of London to accept as obviously from God; and the people would have a right to ask 'What sign showest thou?' And if no sign should be given, they would be very fools to forsake their homes and follow me into the wilderness.

We may on similar grounds find a reason for the miracles ascribed to Christ. Even on the low ground that He was an inspired prophet, we may assume that His mission was to give 'enlargement' to the institutions of Moses, to develop their spiritual significance while putting an end to their outward form, and to extend to other nations blessings which had hitherto been for the most part confined to the Jews. Let Him claim special authority from the God of Abraham and Moses to do all this, and the people might rightly ask, 'What sign showest Thou?' We have here a sufficient reason why the New Prophet should have power to work miracles.

Dr. Martineau suggests a higher conception of the peculiar character of Jesus Christ than the highest which we can include in the notion of an inspired prophet. It is nothing less than a 'moral incarnation,' as distinguished from the personal incarnation which most Christians find in the Gospel by John. In his words there is much beauty and much truth, though not all the truth. 'The Man of Sorrows is our personal exemplar—the Son of God is our spiritual ideal; in whose harmonious and majestic soul, imperturbable in justice, tender in mercy, stainless in purity, and

Christ  
Divinely  
commis-  
sioned.

See  
pp. 206—213  
*ante*.

'Hours of  
Thought.'  
Vol. II.,  
pp. 201—205.

A moral  
incarna-  
tion—ac-  
cording to  
Martineau.

bending in protection over all guileless truth, an objective reflection of the divine holiness is given us, answering and interpreting the subjective revelation in the conscience. . . . What wonder then that we here make a further step in our conception and colouring of the Infinite Perfection; and that as humanity served for its symbol better than nature, so in Christ we find a higher and intenser than in humanity at large. . . . I know not whether others can draw a sharp line of separation between the human spirit and the divine, and can clearly see where their own spirit ends and God's communion ends; but for myself, with closest thought I confess my darkness; and can only say that somehow He certainly stirs among our higher affections and mingles with the action of our proper nature. If in Christ this divine margin was not simply broader than elsewhere, but spread till it covered the whole soul, and brought the human into coalescence with the divine, then was God not merely *represented* by a foreign and resembling being, but *personally* there, giving expression to His spiritual nature, as in the visible universe to his causal power. . . . He whose intellect overarches us in the vault of stars, whose beauty rests on the surface of the earth and sea, embodied His affections and His will in the person of the Son of Man. . . . Once in history, He who lives in us in proportion to our purity of heart, did entirely occupy a human soul, so as to express through it His love, His pity, and the beauty of His holiness. . . . As the heavens declare the dimensions of His outer glory, the Son of Man shows forth the colour of His inner spirit.'

In a sense  
God personally  
in Christ.

Once in  
history.

We can appreciate the beauty of the idea thus put, that Jesus Christ, 'once in history,' was the 'vehicle of



a moral incarnation' to reveal to man what God is morally, as the physical universe reveals what He is in His majesty and power. And we accept it as the highest tribute which Dr. Martineau, with his creed, could pay to the character of Jesus Christ. But it comes short of the Apostle John's idea in the fourth Gospel, and, what concerns our present argument, it does not explain, or account for, Christ's own words and claims. Accept Him as a revelation of the moral in God, and He might be the object of profound admiration, but could not be the object of worship. On the contrary, He, 'full of God,' and thus revealing the claim of God the Father to the trust and love of man, would resent, as a wrong to God, the remotest approach to anything like worship to Himself. And if, in addition to His *being* in Himself a revelation of God's holiness and love, He declared Himself to have been sent of God to be the Saviour and Ruler of men, the old question would arise, 'What sign showest Thou?' and with it the necessity which Moses was under to prove that God had sent Him. His character, if it could be seen and understood then in its entirety and glory as it is now, would have been the best of all signs. But men who only heard an occasional discourse or parable from His lips, and knew in a general way that He went about doing good, were not in a position to see in Him what we can see in Him, the very image morally of the God of Heaven, and were not in a position to dispense with such evidence as they could appreciate that He was indeed sent of God.

This explanation comes short of truth.

See pp. 183—186 *ante*.

When we come to the miracles actually ascribed to Christ and the spirit in which he worked them, we

What the whole truth requires.

John v. 36.

Acts iii. 12.

The additional truth needed.

A reason and an explanation of His miracles.

have to ask whether we have got the whole truth in any doctrine which would deny Him a higher nature than the human, even if invested with the highest authority and personally clothed with the highest moral beauty. He was careful, it is true, to ascribe His works to the Father who had sent Him, that those who saw Him might be assured that they were wrought by divine power, and were designed of God to attest Him as God's servant. But there was something, something quite unmistakeable, in His manner of working miracles, which indicated a claim higher than that of service. 'I will, be thou clean,' are words which no merely human servant could use. They are in strong contrast with the words of Peter and John at a later date. Although on the theory of a divine commission we can account for both the necessity and the performance of miracles, we are left, so far, without an explanation of the way in which Christ performed His. If He was only a prophet we cannot acquit Him of impiety. And, it need scarcely be said, that if we imagine Him guilty of impiety, it is inconceivable that the Great God should have delegated to Him a power which He so abused; and His character, stained by a persistent course of impious self-exaltation, is irredeemably lost.

The additional truth that is needed to give self-consistency to the story of Christ's miracles is—that while He was 'sent of God' He was likewise the Son of God, in that high and unique sense in which the Gospel represents Him to have appropriated the title. Admit this and we have not only a reason for miracles as such, but also an explanation of all that was peculiar in the tones and words with which Christ's miracles were wrought. We now understand how He

should walk through the world, as the very Master of nature; the calmness and quiet dignity which uniformly characterised Him only indicate His divine consciousness that with Him all things were possible. He was Himself, as has been often remarked, the Great Miracle. 'He represents at its culminating point the saving and special intervention of divine love for the redemption of the world. He breaks the chain of natural causes and effects to make a new beginning. He is the Incarnation of redeeming love; and we recognise in Him the supreme manifestation of the pity of the Father, remedying the ruin of the Fall. Particular miracles are only emanations from this living and central miracle.' Thus understood the miracles of Christ are no longer stumbling-blocks or hindrances to faith. They are the outward and visible signs of the presence of Incarnate God on earth.

De Pres-  
sensé's  
'Jesus  
Christ: His  
Times, Life,  
&c.,' p. 310.

The conclusion to which we are thus brought by a review of the words and acts of Jesus Christ involves in it, we are aware, the great and mysterious doctrine of the Trinity. But we do not shrink from it on this account; we cannot get rid of mystery; we cannot flee into any region in which we shall not be surrounded by mystery. Every step we take in physical science conducts to a point where knowledge ends and mystery begins. The discoveries of our age have multiplied the mysteries of our age. It is scarcely an hyperbole to say that everything is a mystery. 'Nothing profound, either in life, in the arts, or in the state,' says Strauss, 'is devoid of mystery.' And it is a dictum of Mr. Herbert Spencer that 'science ends in mystery.' But the mystery in which science ends is not all darkness. And when Mr. Spencer says that it is our

The Trinity.

Mystery in  
science.

highest wisdom to recognise that it is inscrutable, we more than doubt. That science cannot carry us farther in our search we know, and Mr. Spencer himself is not content to rest at the limits to which science conducts him. 'It is rigorously impossible,' he says, 'to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a reality of which they are appearances—for appearance without reality is unthinkable.' What, then, is the reality which underlies all phenomena? which underlies the visible universe? Professor Huxley says, 'When the materialists begin to talk about there being nothing else in the universe but matter and force, I decline to follow them.' What else is there, then? If it were possible for our mind to rest in a blank ignorance—politely called Agnosticism—it would be morally wrong to do so, as I have argued elsewhere. Man is not all intellect; he is conscience as well. And in the most ordinary conscience there is at least enough to suggest the idea of a Moral Ruler, to whom we are responsible; and in our sense of dependence there is enough to suggest the idea that the good we enjoy comes from our Unseen Benefactor. Now we are morally bound to follow up these suggestions, and prove either that they are misleading fancies, or that the Ruler and Benefactor they point to does really exist, and is none other than God over all.

'Handbook  
of Christian  
Evidences.'  
Part I.,  
p. 18.

Mystery in  
Natural  
Religion.

Underived  
existence.

Thus far we may regard ourselves as led by natural reason. But the simplest idea we can have of God, the God of Natural Religion, is absolute mystery. Take for example His underived existence. There is nothing in the universe to which we can liken it; for all other things have an origin or cause. It is only by negations that we can approach towards a conception

of it. We can say what it is not—namely, that it is not derived, but we cannot define what it is. Nor can we define His eternity, or even comprehend it. And as to His unity, the only conception we can form of it is a negation of the existence of other Gods besides Him. ‘Thus,’ says Dr. Crawford, ‘there is nothing exceptional or unexampled in our inability to give a positive or affirmative definition of the Plurality in the Godhead. For we labour under the same inability with reference to some of the most fully ascertained and most universally acknowledged attributes of the Divine nature.’ This Plurality ‘may be one of the unique and incommunicable properties of the Deity, which, like those equally incomprehensible attributes of self-existence, infinity and eternity, distinguish the mode of His existence from that of all other beings in the universe.’

The flippant objection that one cannot be three and three cannot be one, is only a sign of the ignorance, or worse than ignorance, of the objector. That the Godhead cannot be three in the same sense in which it is one, is self-evident. But that it may be three in one respect, and one in another, is equally self-evident. When the Bible asserts, with severe emphasis, that there is only one God, Jehovah, its intention plainly is to exclude the existence, in addition to Him, of other Gods or beings, the same in kind. But this does not determine anything as to what this One Divine Being is in Himself. It is noteworthy that the usual Hebrew appellation for God is a plural term, Elohim; and this plural term is used even in asserting the Divine Unity—‘Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God [Elohim] is one Jehovah;’—the plural term, Elohim, being used at the very time when it was the purpose of the inspired law-

See the  
Baird Lec-  
tures on  
‘Mysteries.’

Not Three  
and One in  
the same  
sense.

Unity in  
Old Testa-  
ment.

Deut. vi. 4.

giver pointedly and solemnly to affirm the Unity of the God of Israel.

It would lead me too far a-field at present to prove that the doctrine of the Trinity is Scriptural, and to repel the objections that are taken to it. I have only to maintain that there is no *a priori* reason why it should be rejected. Nature lifts the veil off the nature and being of God, and we see Him Self-existent and Eternal. When Revelation lifts the veil still further off the nature and being of God, it need create no surprise, if we see further mystery in Him, and find Him to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

This Plurality in the One Jehovah is not set forth in Scripture as a philosophical, or an arithmetical, or a mechanical, abstraction. It is not taught in any systematic way, nor presented to us as a wonder to overwhelm us with a sense of our incapacity to comprehend it. It is embodied in the great scheme of human redemption which the Bible unfolds, and of which it gives us the history from Paradise to Calvary. In the development of that scheme it shines forth in rays which do not dazzle and blind through excess of light, but which guide the conscience and the heart to peace. The writers in whose books it appears are all unconscious of discovery or invention. And the absence of any attempt to explain or defend it, is no mean proof that the doctrine was not theirs, but God's; and that the wisdom which guided them in the form in which they set it forth was not theirs but His.

If exception be taken to the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ, we reply on the same principles. We deny the rightfulness of any *a priori* objection to it on the score of mysteriousness, and main-

Further  
mystery to  
be expected  
in the  
Revealed  
God.

Not a philo-  
sophical  
abstraction.

No attempt  
to explain  
the Trinity.

tain that it is a question of fact. The positive evidence for it cannot be set aside on the ground that we are unable to comprehend *how* the Divine nature was united to the Human, or *how* God took the human nature into union with His Divine nature. The words and works and character of Jesus Christ, we have found to be inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that He was both God and man.

We need not concern ourselves with the question whether the Incarnation was necessary only to effect the redemption of man, or whether 'it was due to the primal and absolute purpose of the love foreshadowed in Creation.' 'The belief,' says Doctor Westcott, 'that the Incarnation was in essence independent of the Fall has been held by men of the most different schools, in different ways and on different grounds. All, however, agree in this, that they find in the belief a 'crowning' promise of the unity of the divine order; a fulfilment, a consummation, of the original purpose of Creation; a more complete and harmonious view of the relation of finite being to God than can be gained otherwise.'

Whether this be so or not, it is certain that the advent of the Son of God in our nature, as set forth in the Gospels, brings God nearer to us and brings us nearer to Him, without an oppressive sense of His infinite greatness. The majesty of God revealed in nature, and most impressively described in the Bible, instead of attracting us, repels us. It bids us stand at a distance. It baffles all our attempts to conceive of Him as a Being, or to conceive of Him as a Being who will care for such as we are. 'When I consider the heavens the work of Thy hands, what is man that Thou art mindful of him?' is the exclamation which

The Divine and Human united—how, not explained.

Whether incarnation apart from redemption.

Essay on 'The Gospel of Creation,' in Commentary on 'The Epistles of St. John.'

The Incarnation brings God nearer.

it suggests instinctively. The Bible succeeded of old wonderfully in overcoming this difficulty, by distinct and authoritative assurances that God would hear prayer, would accept worship, and would commune with the soul that sought Him. It gave prominence to the moral attributes of God, His righteousness and love, attributes which bring God nearer to the conscience and the heart, however far the physical universe might seem to remove Him from our comprehension. It gave Him the title of Father; and thus, however incomprehensible infinitude might be, the relationship of Father and child seemed to bring God near, and enabled the humblest to look beyond the stars, and to think, not so much of the Sovereign of the Universe, as of the Father of Spirits. And now, to crown all, the Incarnation has shed a flood of light on these Old Testament grounds of confidence towards God, and has furnished us with aids before unknown towards the realising of God as a Being to whom we can speak, whom we can trust, and whom we can love. We contemplate unnumbered worlds, peopling space through depths and heights which baffle our imagination, and are confounded with the power and the intelligence which have created, and which sustain this wondrous universe. And although our reason necessitates the belief that this power and intelligence must reside in a Person—that is, that they are the attributes of an Almighty and All-wise Being—our belief in Him is cold and heartless; we cannot draw near, we cannot love, we scarcely dare worship. But let us see God revealed, Incarnate, in the pure, sinless, loving, Jesus, our heart may well bound with joy. We can draw near, we can love, we can trust, we can worship. The divine majesty is not less overawing than it was; but

'Father'  
in the Old  
Testament.



when it is veiled in humanity, and clothed in loving condescension, it only serves to prevent my love degenerating into familiarity, and inspires it with the reverence of worship.

Without, then, assuming that the Son of God should have become man, even although there had been no need of His interposition to redeem mankind, or without assuming that 'unfallen man needed the mediatorial work of Christ for the support of his union with God,' we see that the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, apart from its redeeming purpose, serves most gracious ends. Whether any one can realise these ends, if he separates the Incarnation of Christ from His redemptive work, may be more than questioned. Christ *came* that He might give His life a ransom for many. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man. Forasmuch as those whom He came to save were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the devil. On the connection between the Incarnation and the sacrificial death on the cross—the Incarnation taking place in order to that death—the teaching of Scripture is explicit. And it is not in the language of apology but of glorying, that we speak of the mystery of the Incarnation and of the Atonement of the Incarnate One.

Known  
reason for  
the Incar-  
nation.

## A CONCLUDING CHAPTER.

These  
doctrines  
permanent

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
pp. 288—292.

1. Cor. ii. 15.  
1. Thes. v.  
21.

BUT are these great doctrines—for they are great if they are true—permanent and essential elements of the Christian faith? Is Christianity capable of a legitimate development under new lights, which shall leave them behind as the imperfect conceptions of less enlightened ages? To this last question there are those who would answer in the affirmative. Pfleiderer boldly claims the right of leaving Paul behind, and claims it on the authority of Paul's own example: 'In the performance of this pressing task' [the distinguishing between the letter and the spirit, the permanent and the transient], he says, 'we may take the Apostle Paul himself as our model. As he treated the words of the Old Testament, notwithstanding his great reverence of it, with the supreme freedom of the religious spirit, which is convinced that the truth inwardly revealed to it must be likewise the deepest meaning and true significance of every historical revelation, hidden indeed from the view of ordinary men, but disclosed to the more penetrating glance of the spiritual man (2 Cor. iii. 6—17), so we, on the same principle, may adopt the same line of procedure with regard to the letter of the Pauline and the ecclesiastical system of doctrine. Since we have learned from Paul that Christ has called us to freedom, and that the spiritual man has the right and the duty to judge and to prove all things, we will not put ourselves again under the servile yoke of the letter, which has binding

authority for those under age only, and not for the free sons of God. . . . What should prevent us from interpreting and applying the dogmas which can no longer be appropriated by us in their literal meaning, as valuable symbols of religious and moral truths? 'The letter of Pauline and ecclesiastical theology may be regarded as the transparent covering of sublime truths, which it is our just right and our sacred duty more and more clearly to discover, to bring forth in ever greater purity, and to use with increasing freedom for the edification of our modern Christian churches. For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.'

To the same effect is the teaching of Dr. Abbott, Holding Christ to have been only a 'Consummate Man,' and *as such* the Saviour of men, he says: 'I believe in the spiritual reality of every article of the creeds. The Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Atonement, the Ascension, are to me not mere historical facts, nor theological dogmas requiring mere otiose assent, but profound spiritual realities.' But what, we ask, is the spiritual reality of the Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ? Can it exist apart from the historical facts which these great words denote? Dr. Abbott thinks it may. He denies the supernatural in Christ, and aims to 'disentangle the kernel of truth from its integument of miracle and illusion.' And the spiritual realities which survive the process are only the ideas which Pfeiderer claims the right to substitute for the doctrines taught by Paul.

Now what Pfeiderer claims is briefly this—that as Paul set aside the Old Testament 'with the supreme

In 'Through Nature to Christ,' and in 'The Kernel and the Husk.'

False  
analogy  
with Paul.

Gal. i. 12.

Hibbert  
Lectures.  
p. 91.

freedom of the religious spirit, so he, in the exercise of the same freedom may set aside Paul. To this we reply in brief; (1) That Paul did not set aside, or in any sense make void, the Old Testament. So far as he *interpreted* it, it was by way of eliciting its true meaning. If he abandoned the Jewish Ritual, it was because the Jewish Ritual had accomplished its end. (2) In what Paul did and taught he claimed the authority of a divine revelation. This Pfleiderer does not deny, although, inconsistently, he speaks of Paul as 'a religious genius,' and speaks of his idea of 'the central fact of salvation in the death of Christ' as the means of satisfying a need founded in human nature, as 'one of those marvellous inspirations of genius on which history itself has set its seal.' When Paul says that he received his gospel by revelation of Jesus Christ he excludes these two things—that he received it at second-hand from others, and that it was self-originated, an 'inspiration' of his own. If Pfleiderer cannot claim a like revelation as the source of his new version of the gospel, he cannot claim Paul as his 'model.'

With reference to the gospel which Paul says he received by revelation, he said, 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.' And what this gospel was, Pfleiderer sees as clearly as we do. It is indicated briefly in the words, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins;' and in the words, 'That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me.' With almost equal brevity, Paul states his gospel thus to the Corinthians: 'Now I make known

Gal. i. 8.  
(Rev. Ver.)

1. i. 1.  
ii. 20.  
(Rev. Ver.)

1. Cor. xv.  
1-4.  
(Rev. Ver.)

unto you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved; I make known, I say, in what words I preached it unto you, if ye hold it fast, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.' This is the Gospel which Paul in his letter to the Galatians, guards as with a wall of fire.

Paul's  
Gospel.

The Hibbert Lecturer does not *interpret* Paul's 'dogmas' when he treats them as 'symbols of religious and moral truths.' He denies them; they are part of the letter which killeth, he says; they are at best but 'the transparent covering of sublime truths,' which may be cast away, leaving the truths uncovered and unveiled. The idea or dogma of 'the personal descent of Christ from heaven,' can no longer be harmonised 'with our conception of the universe and man,' and must be regarded only as a 'symbol of the elevated truth that the ideal of man as the child of God had its eternal ground in the will of God.' 'The miracle of the Incarnation' is not something that took place once for all in the person of Jesus Christ; it is to be understood as 'the perpetual revelation of the Divine Spirit in the miraculous transformation of men from sinful children of Adam into holy children of God.' The dogmas of 'Adam's Fall and Christ's Atonement' can no longer be harmonised with 'our ideas of the development of mankind,' and must be regarded only as symbols of the two opposing powers the struggle of which extends through the entire human race.' This, we repeat, is not an *interpretation*

Paul's  
dogmas not  
symbols.

Not de-  
veloped but  
denied by  
Pfleiderer.

or developement of the Pauline doctrines, it is an absolute denial of them. It is not what the old Puritan described as a breaking forth of more light from the word of God, it is the substitution, but little disguised, of ideas for the most solemnly asserted *facts* of the word of God.

For be it remembered that the pre-existence of the Son of God and His descent from heaven, His Incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ, and His Atonement for the sins of men, are *facts*, so declared, not on the authority of Paul alone, but, as we have abundantly shown, on the authority of Christ Himself. And if they were facts eighteen hundred years ago, they are facts still. 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever.' The gospel which He preached concerning Himself and His work is, like Him, unchangeable. The rock cannot be removed, neither can it be melted down.

The Rationalism which would substitute certain vague ideas for the facts of Christianity is not the less to be deprecated because it has not the courage to be consistent, and to reject the form when it has rejected the substance. 'As we know that all things are lawful for us,' says Pfleiderer; 'but all things are not expedient, and that knowledge puffieth up but love edifieth, we will not with violent hands precipitately break up or cast away the forms in which the Apostles and Prophets deposited for Christendom the religious treasure of the Gospel, forms in which the founders of our Protestant churches confessed their faith, and to which the hearts of countless numbers of Christians are still deeply attached.' The question is far deeper than one of form, as we have seen. It is a question of fact and substance. And those who deny the fact and

Facts, on  
the author-  
ity of  
Christ.

Heb. xiii. 8.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Hibbert  
Lectures,  
p. 290.

A question  
of sub-  
stance, not  
of form.

substance are bound as honest men to disuse the terms in which Apostles and Prophets embodied it. Their persistence in the use of these terms by the Hibbert Lecturer, and by the author of 'Through Nature to Christ,' is utterly misleading.

We insist that the forms in which 'Apostles and Prophets deposited for Christendom the religious treasure of the Gospel' are permanent, not transient, because the treasure itself, the Gospel, is permanent, not transient. That we have attained to a perfect knowledge of all that Christ and the authorised exponents of His Gospel taught, we are far from supposing. And we should welcome 'more light;' but it must be 'from the word,' and not from men who think that the teachings of the word must give place to their 'ideas of the development of mankind.'

Substance  
and form  
permanent.

We have now come to the end of our argument, and a very brief summary will suffice. Jesus of Nazareth spoke of Himself and His mission in terms which have no parallel in the words of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, or of any religious teacher known to history. He did so habitually. In the most private and confidential intercourse with His disciples, in the 'great congregation' within the courts of the Temple, at the friendly table of those who sufficiently appreciated Him to invite Him to be their guest, and when arraigned both before the ecclesiastical rulers of His nation and before the representative of the Roman Empire, He asserted for Himself a position of personal dignity and authority, which, if not rightful, justified the charge of blasphemy. Of most teachers the only question we have to ask is, What they say? But in the case of the Founder of Christianity we have to

Summary.

Not merely  
what is  
said, but  
who says  
it?

ask, likewise, Who says it? And this second question is not of inferior importance to the first. Much of what He said has, we know, a value which is independent of the voice which said it. It shines by its own light, it commends itself to our moral nature, and has thus found a place in the common thought of mankind, from which it cannot be dislodged. But even the thoughts and maxims which are separable from the personality of their author, derive much of their power to act beneficially on human society from their connection with HIMSELF. And He was not content that men should accept His words and mis-know or misunderstand Himself. ‘Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?’ Some say that Thou art John the Baptist: some Elias: and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets.’ ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ ‘Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.’ ‘Blessed art Thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.’ In view of such a conversation as this, the distinction which some would make between ‘the religion of Christ’ and ‘religion about Christ’ disappears. The religion of Christ, or the religion taught by Christ, included Himself. He was a part of it and an essential part of it. The Fatherhood of God, spiritual worship, and the duty of a pure and loving life, were not more prominent in His teaching than the doctrines involved in such words as these: ‘The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost’; ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.’ It was not after hearing words of transcendent wisdom respecting either God or man, but after hearing words of mysterious import respect-

Matt. xvi.  
13—17.

To save the  
lost.



ing Himself, and words in which He claimed power to satisfy the moral thirst of mankind—‘If any man thirst let Him come unto me and drink’—that the officers of the Sanhedrim refrained from executing the task on which they were sent, and avowed the awe with which they had listened to Him, saying, ‘never man spake like this man.’ They were acquainted with the style of prophets—the boldness with which they could say in the ears of princes and people, ‘Thus saith the Lord,’—but no prophet ever spoke like this man. The sublimest of them could only say in the name of His God, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters’—but here is a man who could say, ‘If any man thirst let him come unto *Me* and drink;’ as on another occasion He said, ‘Come unto *Me* all ye that labour and are heavy laden and *I* will give you rest.’ And yet the officers of the Jewish priests were not shocked by the words of the Nazarene as presumptuous or impious. There was something in the tone and known character of ‘this man,’ that entitled Him to a reverential hearing, and that should protect Him from the rude hands of unbelieving men.

‘Come  
unto Me.

It is not without interest and instruction that we listen to writers on whom *some* rays of Christ’s self-revealing glory have fallen, but who have not seen the fulness of its light. Theodore Parker says, ‘He unites in Himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realising the dream of prophets and sages; rises free from all prejudices of His age, nation, or sect; gives free range to the spirit of God in His breast; sets aside the law, sacred and time-honoured as it was, its forms, its sacrifice, its temple, its priests; puts away the doctors of the law,

Theodore  
Parker.

subtle, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the rabbis—He rises above them all. Yet Nazareth was no Athens, where philosophy breathed in the circumambient air; it had neither porch nor Lyceum, not even a school of the prophets. There is God in the heart of this youth.' Again, 'Try Him as we try other teachers. They deliver their word: find a few waiting for the consolation, who accept the new tidings, follow the new method, and soon go beyond their teacher, though less mighty minds than he. Such is the case with each founder of a school of philosophy, each sect in religion. Though humble men we see what Socrates and Luther never saw. But eighteen centuries have passed since humanity rose so high in Jesus: what man, what sect, what church has mastered His thought, comprehended His method, and so fully applied it to life?'

Renan.

We may then regard it as a universally acknowledged fact that not only was Jesus Christ 'before His own age,' but that He is before every age. Renan says, 'The foundation of true religion is indeed His work: after Him all that remains is to develop it and render it fruitful.' The fervent Frenchman thus apostrophises Jesus: 'Rest now in Thy glory, noble Initiator. Fear no more to see the edifice of Thy efforts crumble through a flaw. For thousands of years the world will extol Thee. A thousand times more living, a thousand times more loved, since Thy death than during the days of Thy pilgrimage here below. Thou wilt become to such a degree the corner stone of our humanity, that to tear Thy name from this world would be to shake it to its foundations. Between Thee and God men will no

longer distinguish. Complete conqueror of death, take possession of Thy kingdom, whither by the royal road Thou hast traced, ages of adorers will follow Thee.'

The argument we deduce from all this may be introduced by the words of Miss Frances Power Cobbe. Maintaining that Jesus Christ was more than 'the Supreme Moral Reformer of the world,' that He was in a special sense its Spiritual Regenerator, she says, 'Let us obtain the measure of the change introduced into the world by Christianity, and we shall at the same time, obtain the best measure of the greatness of Christ.' 'This great phenomenon of history [the beginning of a new world] surely points to some corresponding great event, whereby the revolution was accomplished. There must have been a moment when the old order stopped and the new began. Some action must have taken place upon the souls of men, which thenceforth started them in a different career, and opened the age of progressive life. When did this moment arrive? What was the primal act of the endless progress? By whom was that age opened?' 'One thing we must believe,' Miss Cobbe says in her answer, 'that He to whom was committed such a work, He to whom such a part was assigned in the drama of history by its great Author, must have been *spiritually* of transcendent excellence.'

Frances  
Power  
Cobbe.

So far true. But the cause thus suggested is not equal to the effect. We submit whether the *rational* explanation of the transcendently glorious character of Christ, of His unique position in the history of mankind, and of the work which, confessedly, He has wrought in the world, be not that His personality was unique, and that, as never before did man speak like Him, so never before had any man the right or

power to speak like Him? Nothing short of this can adequately explain the place of Jesus Christ in 'the life of humanity.'

Christ on  
His own  
Personality

Col. ii. 2.

The argument may take another form. The Jesus to whom all men render such homage and honour, who, on the lowest estimate, was the greatest religious teacher the world has ever seen, who has been the Beginning of a new moral world, must be the best interpreter of His own personality, and of the origin of His wisdom and power. Now we have seen what He said of Himself. And we have endeavoured to 'show cause' against all hypotheses which imply or suggest any degree of dishonesty or insincerity in His words, and against all hypotheses which would make the words ascribed to Him the product or accretion of a later age. The impression of our argument may be confirmed in some minds by the words of authors who do not rise in their faith to the full acknowledgment of the mystery of the Father and of Christ.' 'The four Gospels,' says Miss Cobbe, 'have given us so *living*, if not so *correct*, an image, and that image has shone out so long in golden radiance before the dazzled eyes of Christendom, that to admit it may be partially erroneous is the utmost stretch of our philosophy. . . . One thing, however, we may hold with approximate certainty; and that is, that all the highest doctrines, the purest moral precepts, the most profound spiritual revelations, recorded in the Gospels, were actually those of Christ Himself. The originator of the Christian movement must have been the greatest soul of His time, as of all time. If He did not speak these words of wisdom, who could have recorded them for Him? "It would have taken a Jesus to forge a

A Jesus  
only could  
forge a  
Jesus.

Jesus.” We need not remark again how completely the class of sayings on which our argument is founded is interwoven with ‘the highest doctrines,’ ‘the most profound spiritual revelations,’ and the habitual teaching of the Great Master. There is none with reference to which it is truer, that ‘it would have taken a Jesus to forge a Jesus.’ Now, ‘the greatest soul of all time’ explained the mystery of His greatness by saying, ‘Before Abraham was I am’; ‘I am from above’; ‘I and the Father are one.’

Dr. Channing says, in his ‘Sermon on the Character of Christ,’ ‘The more we contemplate Christ’s character, as exhibited in the Gospel, the more we shall be impressed with its genuineness and reality. It was plainly drawn from the life. The narratives of the Evangelists bear the marks of truth, perhaps beyond all other histories. They set before us the most extraordinary being who ever appeared on earth, and yet they are as artless as the stories of childhood. The authors do not think of themselves. They have plainly but one aim, to show us their Master; and they manifest the deep veneration which He inspired, by leaving Him to reveal Himself, by giving us His actions and sayings without comment, explanation, or eulogy. You see in these narratives no varnishing, no high colouring, no attempts to make His actions striking, or to bring out the beauties of His character. We are never pointed to any circumstance as illustrative of His greatness. The Evangelists write with a calm trust in His character, with a feeling that it needed no aid from their hands, and with a deep veneration, as if comment or praise of their own were not worthy to mingle with the recital of such a life.’

Dr. Channing.

Dr. Channing did not accept the doctrine of the

Dr. Channing on the Sermon on the Mount.

proper Godhead of Jesus Christ, but he not the less accepted as genuine all the sayings ascribed to Him about Himself in the Gospels. Referring to the Sermon on the Mount, he says, 'Jesus does not merely offer Himself as a spiritual deliverer, as the founder of a new empire of inward piety and universal charity; He closes with language announcing a more mysterious office. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." Here I meet the annunciation of a character as august as it must have been startling. I hear Him foretelling a dominion to be exercised in the future world. These words I better understand, when I hear Him subsequently declaring, that after a painful death, He was to rise again and ascend to Heaven, and there, in a state of pre-eminent power and glory, was to be the advocate and judge of the human race.' Dr. Channing concludes: 'The Gospels must be true; they were drawn from a living original; they were founded on reality. The character of Jesus is not a fiction; He was what He claimed to be, and what His followers attested. Nor is this all: Jesus not only *was*, He is still the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He exists now; He has entered that heaven to which He always looked forward on earth. There He lives and reigns.'

How all this can be said and the proper divinity of Jesus Christ denied, it is difficult to perceive. But I have quoted these passages from Channing because of his unquestioning acknowledgment of the genuineness of the words in which Jesus magnified Himself. And 'the charge of an extravagant, self-deluding

enthusiasm is the last,' he says, 'to be fastened on Jesus.' '*Jesus was what He claimed to be, and what His followers attested.*' This—and the words are Channing's—is all that we assert. And the only question is, *what* do His followers attest in the Gospels that He claimed to be?

Jesus,  
what He  
claimed.

If His claims did not amount to a claim to divine worship, these consequences follow:—

If not,  
certain  
conse-  
quences.

1. As we have seen—that He allowed Himself to be put to death on a charge of blasphemy from which He could have freed Himself, by a single word of explanation to the effect that He was misunderstood. Instead of uttering that word, He confirmed in the most solemn manner the interpretation which was put on His assertion that He was the Son of God—the interpretation on the strength of which the Jews said to Pilate, 'We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.'

A Blas-  
phemer.

2. Another consequence follows, if Christ's claims did not amount to a claim to divine worship, He has been the author or 'initiator' of a new and vast system of idolatry, and He is Himself the idol which He has set up in the place of God. The words of Renan are true—more true than He meant—'Between Thee and God men will no longer distinguish.' We are far from maintaining that whatever is is right. Those great societies called Churches, whether of the East or of the West, whether calling themselves Catholic or calling themselves Reformed, may have, both in their beliefs and in their practices, not a little for which no sanction can be found in the words of Christ or of His Apostles. It may be questioned whether any church is wholly true to 'the mind that

Author of a  
new idola-  
try.

All  
Churches  
worshippers  
of Christ.

was in Christ.' And the Christianity of Christ must not be held responsible for the 'concrete' Christianity of the Churches. But the Christianity of Christ is responsible for the worship of Christ which has prevailed in all churches, with exceptions which, whatever their importance in other respects, are insignificant in number. The Greek and Roman Churches—and Churches, Protestant or Reformed—are, and have always been, one in worshipping Christ as divine. This is a notable fact. We do not argue that truth must be with the majority; it is often the possession of the fewer. Nor do we plead for anything like the authority of councils or of tradition. But we have already, in our argument, traced those ideas of Christ's divine glory, and of the peculiarity of His work as a redemption from guilt and sin, which we find in the acknowledged Pauline Epistles, back to the very beginning of the ministry of the personal disciples of Jesus Christ, Peter and John. And not only was there no lapse of time between the departure of Christ and that beginning, that could account for the possibility of a transformation of His teaching respecting Himself to the opposite of what it really was, but we find the germs of their teaching, and more, in His own words. Some of these words are so plain and explicit, that the teaching of John and Paul can scarcely be called even a development of them. Between Christ according to Himself, and Christ according to Paul and John, there is no gulf, no difference; no difference in the matter of His claims to the worship, love, and obedience of mankind; no difference in the matter of the dependence of mankind on Him for salvation from sin and for all spiritual good.

Between  
Christ and  
Paul no  
gulf.

We hold Christ Himself then responsible for the



divine worship which has been rendered to Him ever since He left the world; and if this worship is not His by right, we are in a dilemma from which there is no deliverance. The greatest of prophets, the greatest of religious teachers, the devoutest of men, the most self-denying servant of God, through some defect or other, moral or intellectual, so misinstructed His disciples, that from the first hour of their ministry they exalted Him before the world as Himself the object of faith! He who came as the Servant of God, to set up a Kingdom of God in the world, has set up a Kingdom of His own—and that not through the ignorance or perversity of those whom He employed as agents, but through the force of express teaching in which He assured them that all power in heaven and earth was His! He who came as the Revealer of the Living and True God, as the only God and the Father of Men, and whose mission was to turn mankind from their idols to worship their Maker, has put Himself in the place of their Maker, thus substituting the one Idol, Himself, for the lords many, and gods many, of heathendom! Is this credible? Can the thought of it be entertained for a moment? And yet it is to this conclusion we are shut up, if Jesus Christ is not entitled to the worship which His own teaching taught His disciples to render, and which, amid many aberrations of judgment and obliquities of life, they have continued to render ‘even until now.’

Christ responsible for the worship offered to Him.

We have seen in the course of our argument how the hypothesis which accepts the words of Christ as genuine, and acknowledges the rightfulness of the claims asserted in these words, covers, explains, and harmonises all the historic facts of the case. It

What the true Hypothesis accomplishes.

furnishes a key to the unity and connection of the many books which form the one Bible. It accounts for the Messiahship assumed by Jesus Christ, so different from that which His nation expected, but so true to that which prophets had foretold. It accounts for the fact that from the very beginning the preachers whom He sent out 'into all the world,' made HIMSELF the chief subject of their ministry. It explains the marvellous consistency of His entire personal consciousness and character, and gives consistency to the whole Gospel history of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it justifies the Apostles in magnifying their Master and His mission, even as having an interest to, and having relations with, races other than human.

Eph. ii.  
20—21.  
iii. 10.  
I. Peter i.  
12.

Martineau  
against  
Paul.

In 'Hours  
of Thought.'

Dr. Martineau is bold enough to think that Paul was wrong in ascribing what he calls a Kosmical significance, or what we might call a Universal significance, to the revelation of God in Christ. 'Had the Apostle (he says) as he lay on deck by night looked into the clear Ægean sky, . . . had he known what affluence of worlds there is, and how they lie in the perspective of space, I suppose he would have been content with giving his gospel a human significance, and have reduced his doctrine from Kosmical to terrestrial.' But Paul did look into the clear Ægean sky, and knew enough of the wonders of that sky to exclaim with the Psalmist, 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him?' Yet he did believe that the Maker of the heavens is mindful of man—yea, he believed that the Maker of the heavens has visited man in man's own form, and in human form wrought out a salvation for man which could be effected in no other way. And herein lies

the difference between Paul and Dr. Martineau, and the secret of the exception which Dr. Martineau takes to the far-reaching significance which the Apostle ascribes to his gospel. If Jesus was only a man, and if His highest function was to reveal in His character the purity of God, the conclusion is reasonable enough that His mission had only a human or terrestrial significance. But if Jesus was what Paul believed and preached Him to be, and if His death was designed to be the means of restoring a fallen world to God, then so wondrous an Incarnation, and so wondrous a means of saving a lost world, might well have a significance wide as the moral universe of God, and be an occasion of revealing somewhat of the manifold wisdom of God even to principalities and powers in the heavenly places.

What Paul  
believed.

These things being so—the only hypothesis which harmonises and explains the facts which we have reviewed being that which recognises the truth of Christ's words and the rightfulness of His claims—why should we not accept it? What doth hinder? On the part of many it is only the scientific superstition, or rather the unscientific superstition, that the supernatural is impossible, or at least so improbable that whatever professes to be of supernatural origin, or to be the result of any cause not known among the laws and forces of nature, is *ipso facto* to be accounted legendary. Those who hold by what is familiarly called orthodoxy, are charged with coming to the study of Biblical claims and doctrines under the influence of dogmatical prepossessions. But the most positive and inveterate prepossession which I know is that of those who insist that the supernatural cannot

What doth  
hinder?

Anti-super-  
natural  
preposses-  
sion.

be historical. If this prepossession be accepted, we are reduced to a condition of the utmost hopelessness. It places a gulf between God and man which cannot be passed; it implies impossibilities which God Himself cannot overcome. So that whether our Maker wills it or not, or whatever may be the urgency of human want or woe, He is doomed to the Epicurean enjoyment of His own Olympus. He cannot make His voice heard or His hand seen on earth. So far as men are concerned, He may as well not be as be. But we revolt from a conclusion which would make us men, of that whole creation which has long groaned and travailed for deliverance, the most miserable portion.

The highest  
super-  
natural.

The supernatural may be admitted, we know, and yet the highest mystery of the supernatural, the Incarnation, be denied. But it is not the mere supernatural, but this highest form of it, that is involved in the claims of Jesus Christ. And in the interests of a true rationalism, we object to any *a priori* objection to it. It is not for us to determine what the Infinite God can and cannot do. The question, so far as it comes within the cognisance of our finite minds, is, as already maintained, only a question of facts. Was it so, or was it not?

Matt. xxvii.  
22.

What shall  
we do with  
Jesus?

Those who will not have the Christ as self-revealed in the Gospels, must answer the question which Pilate put to the Jews of old: 'What shall I do then with Jesus?' What shall we do with Him? We cannot blot Him out of the world's history. He is there, an undeniable fact. What shall we do with Him? The Jews around Pilate's judgment seat were prompt with the answer, 'Crucify Him.' But very few, even among unbelievers, in these days, are prepared to echo this cry. They are impressed, as even Pilate was, with

John xix.  
7-9.

something in this man that is not commonly found in men, something that entitles Him to consideration and reverence. And if He will accept of such worship as man may render to man they will give it. But when they find that this comes short of what He demanded for Himself, and of what His earliest followers rendered to Him, they are perplexed. They are not prepared to adopt the faith of Thomas and John and Paul, but neither will they consent to the wild cry of the Jewish populace. And the only thing possible—and yet it is not possible—is to find a *via media*. They take the Gospels into their hands, and treat them as so much clay which they may mould into such shape as their preconceptions may determine. Or they take Gospel facts, and without either explicitly denying or explicitly accepting them, they ‘volatilise’ them into ideas. And thus they save their hearts the painful consciousness of doing despite to Him whom they confess to be the noblest figure in the world’s history, the divinest of *men*. But after all this compromise does not avail. The trial before Pilate is a plain matter of history. Jesus is charged with blasphemy in that He called Himself the Son of God. And His accusers stand firmly on the law of their nation that the penalty of blasphemy is death. And He dies accordingly. What shall we make of Him? If He was not the Son of God in a supreme sense which made Him equal with God He was guilty of blasphemy, and the sentence wrung from Pilate was a just sentence. We, of these last times, cannot rid ourselves of the responsibility of saying, without evasion, which was right, Jesus Christ or His accusers? If Paul be appealed to as umpire, or rather if God be appealed to according to Paul, the question is soon

No *via*  
*media*.

Rom. i. 4.

determined. And moderns who do not accept this decision are as far off as ever from an answer to the question, What then shall we do with Jesus? How explain Him, and His place in the history of the world?

Advancing  
light.

There are who, not knowing what to think of Jesus, perhaps not caring, talk of the advancing light of the age, and hope, or seem to hope, for some revelation, not indeed from God but from man, which shall be the end of controversy. But in the face of the world's history, it needs no boldness to say that they only deceive themselves. In the department of physical science, and in those arts of which that science has been the creator and minister, the world is new. But in the department of the spiritual and divine, the most pretentious thinkers of the day can give us nothing better than was possessed by the fathers of the Aryan races at the remotest period at which they became known to us three thousand years ago—a vague and undefined Pantheism. Or if Agnosticism be considered an 'advance' on such thinking, what is it but darkness, avowed darkness? Eighteen centuries ago the Christian Apostle said boldly, in the face of the philosophies of Greece, that the world had failed to know God by its wisdom; and the world, though unwilling to confess its impotence, was at that time deeply conscious of its failure, and sinking into the weariness of despair. The centuries which have elapsed since have only confirmed the Apostolic verdict. 'In criticism and in negation, philosophy has made many strides; men have grown wiser in pulling down, but not in building up.' System after system has arisen and blazed proudly for a season, only to go out in the darkness whence it came, like

Pantheism.

Agnosticism.

the *ignis fatuus*. Positive religious results there have been none; and a more miserable spectacle cannot be imagined than that which is presented to us in the history of unaided human thought—man a weary drudge, like the horse in the grinding mill, traversing the same weary circle without end.

Certain Jews of old asked, 'When the Christ shall come, will He do more signs than those which this man hath done?' In the spirit of this question we may ask, When the light cometh, which some profess to be waiting for and hoping to see, will it be purer, brighter, than that which the Gospel has shed on both God and man? When the Light-bearer cometh who is to chase away our darkness and solve our perplexities, can we imagine Him to furnish 'more signs,' either in personal beauty of character, or in any other way, that His light is from God? In answer to such questions as these even Renan says, 'Whatever may be the unexpected phenomena of the future, Jesus will not be surpassed. His worship will constantly renew its youth, the tale of His life will cause ceaseless tears, His sufferings will soften the best hearts; all the ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born that is greater than Jesus.' Jesus, we believe, is the world's last and only hope. The weariest souls find rest in Him as of old; the greatest intellects bow down before Him. Let the sun be darkened in the heavens if you will, but take not from us that 'Sun of our Soul,' the Christ of God.

It is with no misgiving that Christians challenge the world to contemplate their Lord, to study His character, His professions, His claims, and to determine whence and who He is. That He stands alone in the history of the world—its greatest and best man—and

No religious progress.

John vii.  
31.  
(Rev. Ver.)

Purer light possible?

More signs possible?

The world challenged to study Christ.

that He is, whether by His teaching or in some other way, the most potent spring of the world's civilisation and progress, is confessed universally. But we demand that men shall confess a great deal more. He demanded it Himself, and His sinless character and superhuman wisdom entitled Him to be heard. Is it too much to expect that men who are conscious that they are but children in understanding, and conscious, like Augustine, of the burden and unrest of sin, should welcome in Him a mystery which sheds a glorious light on the character of the Great God, and is a fountain of untold blessing to mankind? The glorious company of the Apostles, the goodly fellowship of the Prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and the Holy Church throughout all the world, are truly justified in saying: 'Thou art the King of glory, O Christ: Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father: When Thou tookest on Thee to deliver man, Thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb; When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers: Thou sittest at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father: We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge.' We adopt this great ancient song, and with Paul Gerhard we say—

'For Thee, since first the world was made,  
Men's hearts have waited, watched and prayed;  
Prophets and Patriarchs, year by year,  
Have longed to see Thy light appear.

'Thou art our Head—then, Lord, of Thee,  
True, living members we will be;  
And in the strength Thy grace shall give,  
We'll live as Thou wouldst have us live.

'As each short year goes quickly round,  
Our Alleluias shall resound;  
And when we reckon years no more,  
May we in Heaven Thy name adore.'

The *Te Deum*.

Paul  
Gerhard.





## Date Due

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